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PLATFORM

How to win friends and influence people

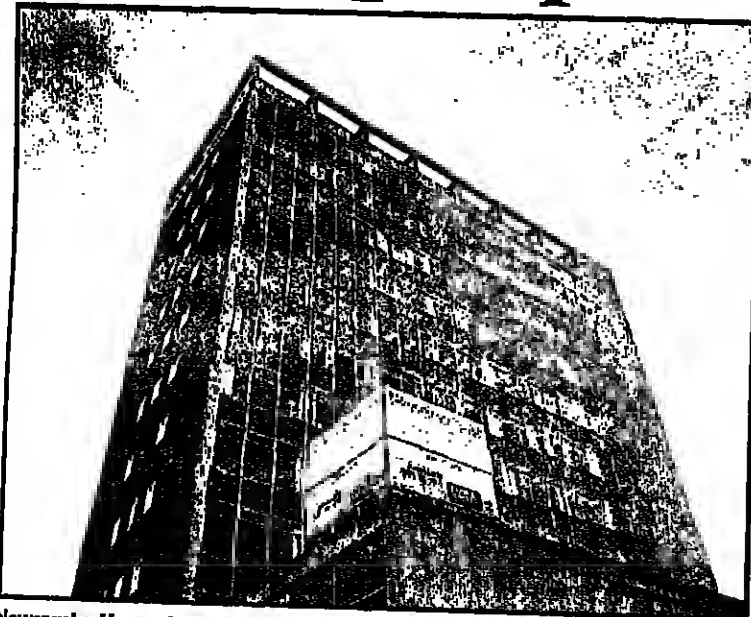


John Mann, retiring Secretary of the doomed Schools Council, offers the new Curriculum Development Committee the fruits – not all of them bitter – of the Council's experience

The Industry Project (SCIP) which, in its first phase, included five local authorities in different parts of the country.

What was most interesting to us in reviewing that project was to find that what teachers and I.e.s.a. valued most, above cash, information or sharing experiences, was the feeling that they were taking part to a national programme. Like teachers in the Morrell award schools, they valued the recognition conferred by their inclusion in a national scheme, and the resulting advantage when it came to fighting their corner in school and I.e.s.a.

SCIP has also shown how the Council can bear fruit and multiply. The Council gave grants only in I.e.s.a.s which were ready to contribute people and funds. At the same time both Council and I.e.s.a.s benefited hugely from the Department of Industry's support. Its Industry Education Unit made substantial grants to individual



Newcombe House, home of the Schools Council and the Curriculum Development Committee at Notting Hill, London.

I.e.s.a.s and to the project's central team.

The Council has also had successful partnerships with many other agencies. Government departments, such as the Foreign Office and the Home Office; public bodies such as the Health Education Council and the Manpower Services Commission; charitable trusts such as Rowntree, Gulbenkian and Ford; professional bodies such as the Royal Institution of British Architects, and the Association for Science Education; and international bodies such as the European Commission and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and many other agencies have hammered out proposals with the Council and contributed handsomely to the project.

There is hardly any limit to those who are eager to contribute time, energy and funds, but who need help in deciding how to contribute effectively.

For the past four or five years the Schools Council has provided a major focus for collaborative enterprises of this kind. In doing so, and in bringing parents, industrialists, and others together to shape its decisions and its activities, the Council has helped to strengthen the links between education and other aspects of society. It has also been amazingly successful in organising the interest and commitment of many thousands of teachers, advisers, lecturers and officers. Their time and efforts were contributed voluntarily to developments sponsored by the Council.

Few of the Council's 180 projects, and hardly any of its recent programme activities, could have hap-

pened with this contribution.

Research and development in education are, for the most part, matters not for cloister, study and laboratory; but for empirical investigation involving skilled practitioners. Whether it was Joan Tough's early work in language development, Geography for the Young School Leaver in the Council's middle period, Ralph Callow with Olfed Children or the current Secondary Science Curriculum Review, much of the Council's best known work has depended on its success in engaging the active help of hundreds of teachers.

In its latest phase, the five programmes conceived in 1979 and launched in 1980, the Council has been more anxious than before to ensure that its activities involve large numbers of practising teachers. Other changes in emphasis came from the Council's increasing realization that successful innovation depends on the active support of both teachers and I.e.s.a.s.

The Council took more notice of what teachers and users of the school system believed to be the most pressing issues and has concentrated its resources on local activities supported by teachers and I.e.s.a.s. The authorities are well placed to identify needs, but even more important, their responsibilities for providing schools and overseeing the curriculum mean that their understanding and support are needed to carry through any substantial change.

A small curriculum body cannot hope to reach all teachers in all schools. It would even be hard pressed to identify and reach all the teachers of the most estate minority subjects. It

must look to local authorities as its most immediate audience, and the only agency capable of supporting changes over a period long enough for them to become established in many schools.

The Secondary Science Curriculum Review, launched in 1981 and expected to run until 1986 or later, illustrates many of these points. It arose, in part, from the expressed concern of practising teachers, as such as the ASE and the Health Education Council, and depends on the contributions of hundreds of teachers in many local groups, plus active participation of I.e.s.a.s and other staff.

The review's day-to-day work is widely dispersed in grassroots level. Its organization and management is undertaken centrally by a specialist team recruited for the purpose. They use the council's administrative and financial teams, and benefit from contacts and collective expertise in curriculum development.

The Council is able to oversee progress and will benefit from its review's experience in curriculum development. In the past specialist project teams based in the provinces have not always had the Council's best staff, nor has the Council itself had permanent staff able to learn from the experience gained by projects.

Nor has the Council done as much as it might to present its findings in simple, accessible ways. Both teachers and officers need short, straight forward guides to new developments. From time to time the Council has tried to meet this need, as it did in the Practical Curriculum, in a recent guide to one-year courses for 16 to 17-year-olds, and in the latest in this series, Primary Practice.

We do not go along with the East India Company's old hand ad advised a new recruit "the style as it likes is the 'undrum'; but we do think 'Is it an easy read?' is a fair question. Providing simple guides to curriculum issues affecting a whole age group or an area of the curriculum, is a necessary part of a development body's work. An overview of recent work in language and communication, for example, or design and technology, would now be timely.

For above all a central development agency needs to find ways into the consciousness of practising teachers. At the heart of education is the relationship between teachers and learners. In that relationship there is no simple way of pigeon-holing what is taught and how it is taught, no simple way of pigeon-holing teaching skills and learning resources.

One of the most important lessons the Council has learned is that curriculum development and professional development are inseparable, and that neither can be considered sensibly without knowing what resources are to hand.

But perhaps the most important lesson is that if a development agency is to survive it needs to engage also the hearts of Whitehall and the minds of Westminster. That I fear is a problem the Schools Council has not cracked.

John Mann, former Secretary of the Schools Council, is now Director of Education for the London borough of Harrow.

NEWS

Girls less keen on science after puberty

The physical onset of puberty appears to prompt a sharp downturn in how girls view school science lessons. And changes over a period long enough for them to become established in many schools.

The survey, by Janet Dawe, now at the Tameside Girls and Science Initiative, was published in 1981. Her results were given at the recent Second International Conference on Girls and Science and Technology, held in Norway.

Two hundred and sixty nine pupils were given IQ and developmental tests and questioned about their attitude to science in their first and second years.

Girls were asked when and if their periods had started and were consequently divided into early, normal and late developers. Pupils were surveyed again in their final year of secondary school.

To find out how pupils viewed science, they were asked to rate six statements – including, "I am not interested in learning about science"; "I feel hopelessly lost in science" – on a five-point agreement/disagreement scale.

The scores showed that all pupils became less interested in science as they began to feel more lost in lessons over the years, but that by their final year the girls indicated that they felt more lost than boys, and did not see science as such a worthwhile subject to study.

By the second year tests, the girls who had already started their periods showed more negative attitudes than the other pupils. However, the responses of these early maturing girls were closely reflected in the mean

value for all girls of most of the items on the third testing, at 16-plus. "What we are seeing is a fairly serious deterioration of attitudes by a particular group of girls by the end of their second year, and assuming that during the third year more girls will begin menstruating then the size of the group with deteriorating attitudes will increase," the report says. "This must have serious implications in terms of how a class is taught if it contains students with such differing attitudes. With the age of the onset of menstruation falling we might see attitudes to school science deteriorating at a much younger age."

Hilary Wilce

Ministers waver as shires condemn spending penalties

by Biddy Passmore

Relief may be on the way for the low-spending councils worst affected by Government's targets and grant penalties for next year.

Mr Patrick Jenkin, the Environment Secretary, is said to have been struck by Tory hostility to his proposals expressed with force at last week's conference of the Association of County Councils in Cardiff, that he is seeking some softening of the penalty system.

Any changes would have to apply to all authorities but they would particularly help authorities like Somerset, which is already spending so little that it has been criticized for poor provision by Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

But Mr Jenkin has still to get improvements past the Treasury. And the Treasury originally demanded a much tougher system than the one now proposed, which would start to penalise councils heavily once they start spending more than 1 per cent over Government-imposed targets.

Mr Jenkin spoke to Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, about the councils' plight soon after his return from Cardiff. But Sir Keith discovered their views for himself at a meeting with local education authority representatives last Friday.

The I.e.s.a.s pointed out to the Education Secretary that cutting back to the Government's planned spending levels next year would mean the loss of 12,600 teaching jobs by next September. They said such a big cut would be quite disproportionate to achieve without doing serious damage to the secondary curriculum.

Sir Keith had told them in a letter that, provided they kept the teachers' pay award down to 3 per cent next year, they should be able to afford a slight improvement in pupil-teacher ratios and find some extra money for books and in-service training.

But they told him angrily that they would be unable to make any improvements and would be grateful if he did not say publicly he expected them to.

The main reason for the difference between the two sides is that the Department of Education's projections for teacher numbers have consistently run well below the numbers actually in post. The local authorities estimate they will be employing some 410,600 teachers next January, compared with the DES estimate of 405,000.

Local authorities pointed out to Sir Keith in July that the rate of decline in the teaching force had already slowed down last year because of councils' struggle to protect the secondary curriculum.

"The DES figures make no allowance at all for redundancy payments," an ACC spokesman said this week. "If we're not going to make people compulsorily redundant, jobs are just going to go where teachers leave."

There is a further gap between the projections of the two sides on school meals and milk: councils expect to spend £438m next year, while the Government expects them to spend £263m.

Central to education authorities' planning for next year, of course, is teachers' pay. The rise in the salary bill which has been built into spending targets is 3 per cent. But the Government's estimate is expected to say soon that contributions must rise by 2 per cent to meet the heavy demand on the superannuation fund from teachers taking early retirement. But it is not yet clear if the extra money will have to be found next year nor whether the councils will try to pass some of the cost of an increase on to the teachers.



Stitching time... Phillip Sander, aged 13, is a case in point in the current debate on equal curriculum opportunities. A pupil at Knowle High School, Blackpool, Phillip recently won a national needlework competition from a field of more than 400 entries.

Pay cut unlawful

A High Court judge has ruled that Hertfordshire County Council acted unlawfully in cutting the pay of its 3,500 kitchen staff earlier this year.

Mr Justice Kenneth Jones, hearing a case brought by the National Union of Public Employees on behalf of six dinner ladies, ruled that a letter sent to them outlining changes in the wages structure did not amount to notice of termination of their existing contracts.

PRIMARY

Brent ruling angers heads

by Philip Venning

When education committee's decision that all its primary schools should be closed by September 1984 is the most blatant example of a power grab for some local authorities to step their powers, according to Mr David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers.

Last month's decision, which also called for the abolition of streaming and banding in the first three years of secondary schools, was a principle far more important than a particular punishment, he said. The local branch of the NAHT has now requested the authority that they have no power to instruct heads to organize their classes and that they should make a decision regarding streaming as a matter for the local authority.

"The fact remains that, whether one agrees with streaming or banding or not, it is the governors who have the oversight of the conduct of the school and it is the head who has responsibility for the internal organization. This management of that school. This traditional division of powers was spelled out in the articles of government which drew their authority from the 1944 Education Act.

Brent was perfectly entitled to express a view on the subject and then ask individual governing bodies to consider them. Mr Hart said. But the NAHT would strongly oppose any attempt to run over school in an identical way. "It is a matter of grave concern that there is this tendency for a number of local authorities who are not the

temptation, to interfere in schools to a quite unacceptable degree."

There were many examples. The NAHT was involved in disputes in several areas where attempts were being made to shackle heads. Mrs D.M. Tuck, the deputy director of education in Brent, said that the council had made it clear in its election manifesto last year that it was interested in this area, and had been given advice that under the particular articles of government in Brent it was legally entitled to do so.

The authority had now started consultations with heads about how to implement the abolition of streaming and banding. It accepted that this would take time to secondary schools and would require suitable in-service training.

Law being flouted over exam results

by Richard Garner

Schools in inner London are flouting the law by withholding examination results or publishing them in a misleading form, according to the results of a survey published this week in *Where?*, the magazine of the Advisory Centre for Education.

As a result of the 1980 Education Act, local authorities are required to provide each year information about individual school examination results and admission arrangements.

However, says *Where?*, the onus is often left to the individual schools to provide the information – even though their lack of enthusiasm for the task means that the local education authority itself is in breach of the law.

However, the claim is hotly denied by the ILEA whose spokesman said: "We do not know of any school which is not publishing this information. We would obviously take a dim view of it if they were and it would be followed up very quickly."

He said that the ILEA published information about its schools in two ways – each division produced material giving information about its schools which was not subject to annual change and therefore did not include examination results and each school produced an annual report which included examination information.

"These annual reports are sent to us and certainly inspectors would draw it to the attention of individual schools if they were not providing the information that they should," he said.

According to *Where?*, about a third of the schools are making a success of providing the information while some remain defensive and a few openly hostile about examination performance.

It says the results of the inner London survey are "a reflection of the national situation".

Union's 3-way refusal

A cuts package that includes redeploying teachers from their existing schools in mid-term has caused a union to challenge it with a three-point plan of industrial action.

Leaders of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers met representatives of Labour-controlled Kirklees Council in a bid to dissuade them from going ahead with cuts which the union says could cost 400 teachers' jobs by next September.

If the cuts go ahead, the NAS/UWT is to:

- refuse to take on the workload of teachers redeployed in mid-term;
- refuse to take on the work previously done by second deputies in the authority's five highest comprehensive schools – whose jobs are to be frozen when vacancies occur; and
- refuse to cover for absent colleagues now the availability of supply cover is being threatened.

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NEWS

Less able helped at a cost

by Biddy Passmore

Bright Welsh children no longer pass more examinations than their English counterparts, but the performance of Welsh children of low ability shows great improvement, according to new research.

Mr David Reynolds, lecturer in education at University College, Cardiff, told the Welsh Secondary Schools Association recently: "The price that we have paid for the improvements in the education of low ability children is that we no longer excel in the achievements of our high ability children."

In 1973-74, he said, Wales sent a higher proportion of pupils than England on to full-time further education, and slightly more Welsh children got at least five O levels or one or more A levels. By 1980-81, the proportion of pupils going on to further education was the same as the Welsh and the proportion of pupils getting five or

more O levels or one or more A levels in Wales had dropped 1.6 per cent behind England's 26 per cent.

But the lower ability range – where Welsh children have consistently performed worse than English children – showed positive signs of improvement. The percentage leaving without qualifications had dropped from 25 per cent to 18 per cent in the two years 1980-82.

Mr Reynolds remarked: "After a search through the British records and from what I know of those of other countries, I am convinced that is the biggest improvement to this figure by an educational system anywhere for at least two decades."

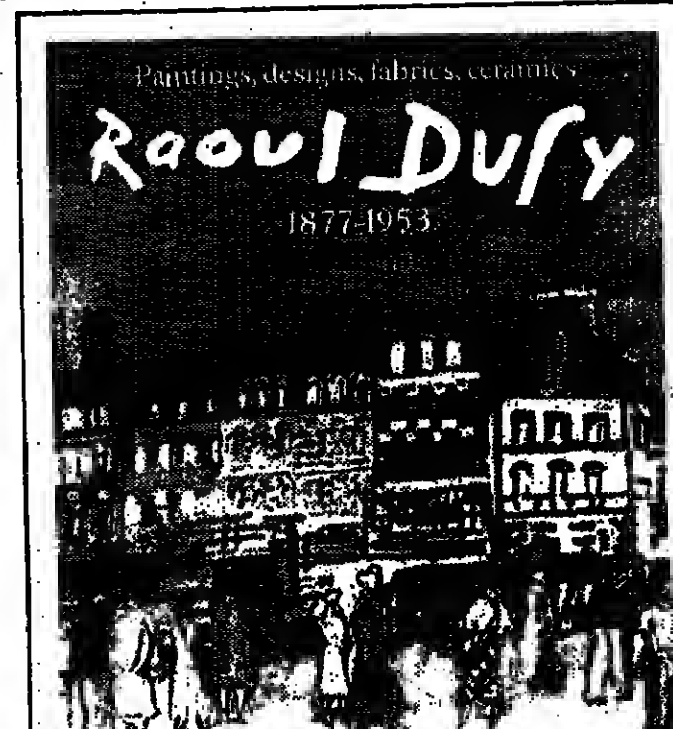
Bad publicity had stunted the worst schools into improving, he suggested, through measures like the publication of exam results under the 1980 Act. Many former grammar school heads

and heads of department had taken early retirement, often replaced by teachers with experience of secondary modern schools who had a positive concern about low ability children.

The Welsh Office and individual local authorities had identified under-performing schools and some were pioneering new courses for children previously considered "non-examination".

But the picture also had a negative side. The publication of exam results was again encouraging schools to concentrate resources on the middle ability range, because it offered a greater chance of success.

Welsh schools must build on improvements by adopting a particular style of management, involving parents, pupils, and staff, Mr Reynolds said.



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NEWS

Biddy Passmore on vital questions facing higher education over the next 10 years

Great debate comes to campuses

The universities' great debate on the future of higher education was launched this week with a warning that the drop in students and funds over the next decade would mean that institutions would have to close.

Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, the new chairman of the University Grants Committee, told a press conference on Monday: "We are now moving into a stage where nothing is unthinkable. It would be better to close some institutions of higher education - not necessarily universities - than to nibble bits off all of them, he said.

He emphasized that the UGC would not itself take a decision to stop funding a university, although it might recommend the closure of departments within universities. The closure of a whole institution must be a political decision for the Education Secretary or the full Cabinet. But

Professor Keith Chayton, the committee's vice-chairman, said the UGC would submit a shortlist - "and it wouldn't be the list the press could think of either," he added.

Sir Peter and his colleagues were introducing the letter which went out last week to all university vice-chancellors and principals asking them 28 questions about the future of higher education into the 1990s. It comes after an "invitation" from Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, to initiate a debate.

The questions cover a wider range than that suggested by Sir Keith. They discuss a broader sixth-form curriculum, two-year courses, the relationship between universities and the public sector, academic tenure and new sources of funding.

The backdrop to the letter is a projected fall of up to one fifth in the

number of 18-year-olds qualified to enter higher education in the early 1990s, and Sir Keith's suggestion that cash per student might fall in real terms by between 1 and 2 per cent a year up to 1990, and by 1 per cent a year in the five years beyond.

Sir Peter has asked all universities to answer the first two questions, which concern the next five years only, by March 31 next year. They ask what changes the institution would make, assuming constant student numbers, if the cash per student were to remain level, or fall at the rate of 1 or 2 per cent a year.

The remaining 27 questions are optional and may be answered either by the university as a whole or by individuals and groups within it.

One asks how higher education should cope with student numbers dropping by 15 to 20 per cent between 1989-90 and 1994-95 and remaining constant thereafter. Should there be mergers between universities and public sector institutions? Should a "significant number" of institutions be closed, and if so, how?

Sir Peter conceded on Monday that an increase in mature and part-time students might make good some of the lack of 18-year-olds. But they would still need money to support them, he said, and a shift to more students taking continuing education would probably require a different balance of subjects.

The letter also asks for comments on such fundamental changes as the replacement of A levels by a broader sixth-form course and the introduction of two-year degrees.

It raises the possibility of remodelling university courses in England and Wales along the lines of the Scottish system with a choice between a two-year general degree or a three-year honours degree, either on entry or after a year at university.

Also, down for discussion, is the distinction between universities and public sector institutions, and between different universities. The letter asks if universities see an essential difference of function between themselves and the polytechnics and colleges, and if

there should be more variety among universities.

Sir Peter said on Monday that he did not see a league of universities emerging in the obvious sense, but rather universities doing different kinds of valuable jobs. "Even universities one doesn't think of as outstanding have some outstanding departments," he said. But there might be a league of university departments.

On collaboration between universities and the public sector, he thought it unlikely there would be a single body like the UGC, running the whole of higher education in 10 years' time. But the NAB - or its successor - would be "pretty close".

The letter raises Sir Keith's favourite theme of lessening the dependence of universities on public funding and the UGC. Would universities like this and what scope do they see for raising additional income, Sir Peter asks. Would the prospects be improved by a change in the tax laws?

Hollowed university traditions such as academic tenure are also raised. The letter points out that early retirement provoked by the 1981 cuts have left a very unbalanced age distribution and that only half of the necessary reduction in staff to meet the drop in student numbers in the 1990s could be met from normal retirements. The letter therefore asks if the normal retiring age should be reduced to 60, with work beyond that on a non-tenured basis.

The debate was instantly welcomed by Lord Flowers, chairman of the vice-chancellors committee, who said the committee had already set up two groups to consider specific issues.

The Association of University Teachers and National Union of Students gave a more cautious welcome to the initiative. Both regretted the UGC's apparent acceptance of government projections on student numbers and funding.

The effects of the 1981 university cuts is shown in new statistics from the UGC, which reveal a fall in the number of full-time home undergraduates last year for the first time in many years.

Extra places offered

Universities have offered to admit an extra 3,500 students next autumn and in 1985, Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer announced on Monday.

In each year, about 2,500 of the extra places offered are in science subjects and 1,000 in the humanities. They would bring the new undergraduate intake next autumn up to about 75,500.

Sir Peter was giving an indication of the universities' response to the UGC's request that they should try to squeeze in an extra 4,000 to 5,000 students in each of the next two years, for no extra money, to accommodate the peak in the 18-year-old age group.

The request followed a letter suggesting this course of action from the Department of Education.

The total number of bids falls well short of the Government's targets. But, Sir Peter said: "For no extra money it's quite an impressive response to need".

In line with the DES request that most of the places should be in vocational subjects, the greatest numbers of offers are in maths and engineering. Some institutions, like Sir David's Lampeter, have pleaded shortage of funds and offered no extra places. Sir Peter said the committee had not yet decided whether to accept all of the offers.



Brian Knight... profitable approach

Charges plan put forward

by Richard Garner

A call for new legislation to charge schools to introduce charges for services beyond a general and basic education is made in a new bill written by the head of a comprehensive school.

Mr Brian Knight, headmaster of Holyrood School, Chard, Somerset, who has served on numerous working parties dealing with school finance, has published a book called *Money, Money, Money*. He says his suggestion could be a "more profitable approach" to solving problems arising from the

"This would mean that local parents being taxed for a state education they would receive their children's education free but would be entitled to pay for extras," he says.

"Admittedly, this approach appears to work against children from poor working class families. But perhaps we need to accept that the ideal of universal education, universally free, is longer realistic."

Mr Knight says that the general basic curriculum would have to be defined by legislators. He acknowledges there could be difficulties adding: "If they said it equals that would be a tragedy."

However, he said that charges would be made for such things as extra tuition in certain subjects, mentioning the many parents already paid for their children to receive private coaching.

He suggested that the legislation could require schools to provide a number of hours of basic education - pupils being able to purchase extra tuition or opt into adult or community education classes at a cost.

Mr Knight, a member of the Secondary Heads Association and former chairman of the Secondary Heads Standing Conference in Somerset, argues that schools should be allowed to introduce a mini-voucher system whereby pupils or people in the community could purchase, say 20 hours of instruction.

Managing School Finance is published by the Heinemann Organisation in School Series, price £9.50p.

Staff anger over probe

by Diane Spencer

Brent teachers are angered at a probe into the decision to launch an independent investigation into standards in secondary schools.

The 2,000-strong Brent Teachers' Association claims that the council acted illegally as the decision to launch an inquiry was not discussed by the education committee. The policy and resources committee made the recommendation to the council which has to approve it.

The main thrust of the investigation is to "assess the concerns of parents and in particular black parents, and levels of provision and achievement and to advise the council on the justification for such concerns, and to advise on what remedial action should be taken".

Mrs Ambrozine Nell, vice-chairman of the education committee, said the week that she wanted the inquiry to eliminate the classification of children - particularly black children - as maladjusted, disruptive or mentally disordered.

How glue sniffers are lured to hard drugs

by Richard Garner

Stoke Rochford. Mr O'Connor showed delegates a photograph of a 19-year-old youth who had died in his bed-sit from inhaling butane gas and warned teachers: "Don't ignore the problems of solvent abuse."

Later the conference was told that 60 youths had died from solvent abuse over the last 18 months, an increase on previous years.

Mr O'Connor said of the sniffers who came to his clinic: "I become aware of a great absence in the quality of their lives. Our educational system must take some responsibility for that - there has been a history of neglect."

"Very many youngsters have responded to our counsellors who have taught them to read. They've perhaps got a copy of *Playboy* or *Ti* with them and you can teach them reading through that."

"So many youngsters without obvious brain damage pass through the

school system still not being able to read. They recognize words but they don't have that fluency that teaches them exhilaration. If you're going to stop them sniffing, what are you going to put in its place? I haven't found one character who has not been reachable."

He accused advertisers and the media of adopting dual standards in their approach to the problem. Meanwhile, a leading firm of adhesive manufacturers, Unibond Ltd, this week issued free posters warning that glue sniffing is hazardous.

Plans to combat glue sniffing by restricting the sale of solvents were announced this week. The restrictions will not have the force of law and the full details have still to be agreed between manufacturers, retailers and the Department of Health. But it is expected that shopkeepers will display signs stating that they reserve the right not to sell certain products to young people.

Boy stays home in exam row

by Hilary Wilce

A 16-year-old Harrow boy has spent more than half a term at home because his father and the local education authority are in conflict about the kind of education he should pursue.

The father wants his son to retake his O levels, but the L.E.A. maintains that school records show he is not up to this level of course.

It acknowledges it has a legal obligation to offer him a full-time education, but insists that this does not have to be of any particular type, only what it deems appropriate, a view that is backed by the local authority associations.

The dispute has highlighted yet again the unclear basis on which all further education rests. More than two years ago a working party of DES and local authority associations representatives reported on possible changes in the law, but no action has been taken.

As things stand, the most widely held view is that authorities can provide education for 16 to 19-year-olds in other schools or colleges, but an alternative interpretation of the law - that authorities must provide school places for all under-19s who want them - is also possible.

The Harrow case centres on the unhappy situation of Vikram Sood, who wants to pursue business studies, but who failed to be offered a place by any of the three sixth-form colleges he applied to get a place through the colleges' clearing scheme in September.

His father, Mr Harman Singh Sood, acknowledges that his son's results were poor (he got the lowest grade in one O level, and two unclassified grades in the others, two grade CSEs, and two grade fours), but says this was the result of family troubles at that time. He says that his son is quite capable of passing O levels.

He has turned down an offer for his son to be interviewed at a further education college, maintaining that it was unsuitable.

He claims he had initially accepted a place offered to his son to repeat a year at school, but was then told the place was conditional on his son seeing an educational psychologist. His son does not need to see a psychologist, he says, and the authority is oversteering his rights by demanding he does so.

In reply, officers dealing with the case say the authority's practice to have an assessment done when any pupil is moved up or down in school is a standard procedure in all schools in the area.

Graded tests planned

by Nick Wood

Another major group of exam boards and I.E.A.s has announced plans to spend several hundred thousand pounds over the next few years on developing graded tests.

At a meeting last week, representatives of GCE boards based in Cambridge, Oxford and Bristol, and the West Midlands CSE board together with officers from 15 Midlands authorities, committed themselves to a research and development programme aimed at producing graded tests in six subjects - maths, science, English, French, CDT and humanities.

Dr Robert Tuffnell of the University of Cambridge board, the project's director, said they hoped to involve every exam board and I.E.A. in the Midlands Examining Group and to offer the tests on a national and international basis.

Such schemes have already been unveiled by the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations in conjunction with four I.E.A.s - Oxfordshire, Somerset, Coventry and Leicestershire - and the London exam boards together with the ILEA.

Dr Tuffnell will lead a team of full-time researchers, administrative staff and teachers working on second-

ment. He envisages appointing teachers as area leaders for each of the six subjects and using exam board subject officers, local authority advisers and teachers to support their work.

The first tests should be ready for use by September 1985, though Dr Tuffnell stresses that plans are still at a provisional stage. He said the group had decided to go ahead with graded tests because they were a "means of motivating candidates".

"Since they can stop at a given level, the tests can provide short-term targets for children who may not reach GCE or CSE standards." They were "complementary" to the existing public exams which nominally only catered for 60 per cent of the ability range.

Development work will proceed in four phases, he said:

- A survey of the curriculum in each subject;
- The grouping of learning objectives in a series of cumulative or progressive levels;
- The design of tests suitable for assessing attainment at these levels; and
- Measurement of the success of the tests and any subsequent modification.

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Oxford drops entrance exam

Oxford University colleges have agreed by an overwhelming majority, on reforms of the admissions procedure which should produce a higher proportion of students from maintained schools. They will all take effect in 1985 for candidates seeking entry to Oxford in 1986.

The chief reform is the ending of the post-A level ("Seventh Form") entrance examination, which is thought to give an advantage to public schools who can afford to give their pupils special tuition.

But the colleges are now steeling themselves to face the awkward possibility that next year's admissions process may produce the biggest proportion of successful candidates from the independent sector for many years.

That is because the public schools will be entering their last post-A level candidates for the entrance exams at the same time as their first big batch of pre-A level candidates. The colleges

may try to spread the burden by encouraging candidates to delay entry for a year.

The new, simplified procedures, which will be followed by all colleges, are:

● The UCCA application form will in future serve as the main application form to Oxford, with mid-October as the closing date for applications. The present Oxford entrance form will be replaced by a simple card giving extra details.

● Candidates will be able to name up to three colleges on the card but they will not have to if they have no particular preference. These "open applications" will be distributed among colleges by computer.

● There will be only two modes of entry: mode E and mode N.

● Mode E will be through a written entrance exam available to pre-A level candidates only. Practising school-leavers will sit on the advisory committee for the exam.

● Mode N will be for both pre and post-A level candidates and will be based on past record, school report and interviews. Candidates in some subjects (probably maths and modern languages) may also be asked to take a short written test. Most conditional offers for pre-A level candidates are expected to be still (about AAB) but colleges will be free to make "matriculation offers" requiring only two Es at A level.

● All candidates will be interviewed during the same period in the first half of December.

● Scholarships and exhibitions will no longer be awarded on the basis of the entrance exam but will continue to be awarded for good performance during an undergraduate career.

This last reform has also been adopted by Cambridge University, where admissions tutors have unanimously agreed to do away with entrance awards after this year.

16-plus

GCE and CSE Boards' Joint Council for 16-plus National Criteria

The first stage of the work of the Joint Council for 16-plus National Criteria came to an end this week with the publication of criteria for the last five subjects - art and design, business studies, economics, home economics, and combined sciences. Criteria for other subjects were published in February, Philip Vennan writes.

Only one of this week's subjects - art and design - will be included in the shortlist of eight basic subjects being considered by Sir Wilfred Cock-

croft, chairman of the Secondary Examinations Council, as a basis for advice on the feasibility of a joint exam. Discussions have just started between the GCE and CSE boards' joint council and the SEC, in the light of the earlier proposals on these subjects and the subsequent comments by Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary.

At the end of the summer Sir Keith wrote to the council saying that he expects to make a final decision on whether to go ahead in the second

quarter of 1984. He also made it clear that he was to have the last word on what should and should not be examined.

Earlier in the year the exam boards were alarmed by some of his comments on the first round of published criteria - he rejected certain topics in physics, and dismissed attempts to give English an explicitly multicultural dimension.

Apart from art and design, the other subjects

published this week will join a list of 12 subjects to be considered by the SEC at a later date.

Like previous documents the latest criteria follow a standard format: an introduction, a statement of aims, assessment objectives, content, weighting of assessment objectives, techniques of assessment, and descriptions of what might be expected from a Grade 6 and a Grade 3 candidate. Some subjects offer specimen syllabuses.

possibly multi-choice and/or essay test must account for at least 20 per cent of the total marks. But the joint council has decided not to stipulate any particular form of assessment.

A Grade 6 candidate will normally be expected to show some ability to recall knowledge; some facility with data; familiarity with the main ideas; and an ability to engage in single interpretation.

By contrast, a Grade 3 candidate will have to show higher ability in these areas, and also the ability to use information which is presented in non-verbal form: to select, analyse and interpret more complex information; and to evaluate and make reasoned judgments.

SCIENCE

The criteria for individual science subjects, chemistry, biology and physics, were published in February 1983.

The final batch of criteria includes those for combined science, a category which creates problems for some existing syllabuses with science in their title.

Courses such as the history of science, or science in society, though worthwhile, are not sufficiently close to the aims and objectives agreed by the joint council to qualify.

The aims should include: the opportunity for pupils through practical studies to become well-informed citizens in a technological world; to realize the usefulness and limitations of scientific method; and to pursue suitable further studies in science.

The development of skills, appropriate to science and useful in everyday life; the stimulation of curiosity about science and an interest in the environment; and the promotion of awareness that science is a cooperative and cumulative activity, subject to social, economic, technological, ethical and cultural influences; and that science may be both beneficial and detrimental.

Candidates will be expected to show understanding of scientific facts and theories; terminology; instruments and apparatus; and quantities and their determination.

They will have to be able to observe, measure, and record; follow instructions safely; communicate observations; use and interpret data; recognize and explain the implications in experimental measurements; devise tests to check data; devise experiments and select suitable apparatus; explain phenomena in terms of scientific laws; suggest explanations for unfamiliar situations; apply scientific ideas to solve problems; and recognize the limitations of science.

A maximum of two thirds of marks should be for objective short-answer questions, which should be of multiple-choice type, with only limited opportunities for choice between questions. Free response questions should have a place in the written part of the exam.

Practical work should be an integral part of the course, but some of it could be assessed by written papers. If coursework assessment is selected then the standards should be that which would be applied if the work had been completed at the end of the course. Oral examinations are likely to be of little use.

To clarify some of the general statements the joint council presents three sample syllabuses - one for biology, one for chemistry, and one for physics - based on a core with modules in such subjects as photography, astronomy, earth sciences, electronics, and use of water.

Up to half the marks should be for recall of knowledge; between 20 and 40 per cent for application of knowledge; and the rest for analysis and judgment.

All schemes of assessment, including those with course work, should include a variety of question types, and give an important place to data response questions.

Replies to these questions may be required in the form of short answers.



special study submitted at a given time. The controlled test could be either written or practical.

ECONOMICS

The joint council has decided that economics courses should give students sufficient knowledge to understand the world in which they live, and take part in it. They should also develop the ability to describe their knowledge.

Specifically the course should enable students to understand: the basic economic problem of allocating scarce resources and ways in which it may be solved; the UK economy, current policy issues, and basic economic numeracy and literacy. Students should also be able to discriminate between different sources of information, and between facts and value judgments in economic issues.

All candidates will be expected to demonstrate real knowledge of the syllabus, and an ability to use it in verbal, numerical and graphical form. They will have to apply appropriate terminology, concepts and elementary theories; select, analyse and interpret data; make reasoned judgments and communicate them.

The content should be chosen so that a complete course is provided for those who do not want to take the subject further, while offering enough for those who do. Students should be encouraged to appreciate the interrelationships within the subject and its links with others. To this end syllabus content should not make the subject appear fragmented or beyond the target ability range.

Among the nine areas to be covered are: basic terminology; the functions of organizations (firms, trade unions, banks, for example); trends (population growth, unemployment levels); the nature of economic problems, and economic activity as a means of achieving certain ends (for example, economic growth); economic variables (such as supply and demand); the use of economic instruments (such as taxation and money supply); and the interdependence of parts of an economy and its whole, and the global interdependence of national economies.

Up to half the marks should be for recall of knowledge; between 20 and 40 per cent for application of knowledge; and the rest for analysis and judgment.

All schemes of assessment, including those with course work, should include a variety of question types, and give an important place to data response questions.

Replies to these questions may be required in the form of short answers.

When it comes to assessment, candidates will be expected to show a personal response to a stimulus; record from direct observation; sustain a chosen study; work independently; analyse an idea or subject; select and control materials and processes; synthesize ideas, impulses and feelings with materials, techniques and processes; and use and compose visual elements, such as line, tone, colour, pattern and texture.

The two types of course will be known as Art and Design, and Art and Design Endorsed, where work will be in a single special area such as ceramics or graphics. A candidate will be able to enter more than one subject under either title, but the work undertaken for one subject must not be submitted for another. Certain combinations of special study may also be prohibited.

The joint council make no precise statements about content other than to say that exam boards can add other assessment objectives to those listed. With one exception, all exams should combine course work with a controlled test which should each be worth at least 25 per cent of marks.

The course work could entail the final assessment of several pieces of work, continuous assessment, or a



experiment with materials and techniques; and solve problems in visual and tactile form.

Candidates should also have a relevant working vocabulary, be aware of the historical, social and environmental context of the subject, and have their intuitive and imaginative abilities stimulated.

When it comes to assessment, candidates will be expected to show a personal response to a stimulus; record from direct observation; sustain a chosen study; work independently; analyse an idea or subject; select and control materials and processes; synthesize ideas, impulses and feelings with materials, techniques and processes; and use and compose visual elements, such as line, tone, colour, pattern and texture.

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The course work could entail the final assessment of several pieces of work, continuous assessment, or a

minimum, all courses should include topics on the business environment, structure and organization, business behaviour, people in business, and aiding and controlling business activity.

The aims of the accounting course and the assessment objectives should be broadly similar to that of the business studies single subject course, but more closely tied to the role of the basic principles of accounting.

The course should cover: accounting concepts and conventions; types of business; sources and recording of data; verification of records; income measurement; sources and application of funds; and analysis and interpretation.

The commerce course should also have similar aims and objectives, but should include topics on: the individual and the economy; the consumer and distribution; business ownership; private saving; the role of the state; aids to trade; and overseas trade.

Any of the assessment objectives could be met solely by written papers, but practical assignments developed through course work would be more appropriate at times.

A Grade 6 candidate should have some ability to recall knowledge; apply commonly used techniques and data to the solution of simple problems; be familiar with the main vocabulary and be able to make simple calculations. A Grade 3 candidate should be more adept at all these functions, and should also be able to analyse and discuss.

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HOME ECONOMICS

Home economics may focus on any one of four aspects - family, home, food and textiles, or on a combination of them. This must be reflected in the title of the exam. Whatever is chosen, all syllabuses must include health and safety, human development, aesthetic appreciation, and consumer rights and responsibilities.

The courses should aim, among other things, to increase pupils' understanding of people's various needs; develop the qualities of sensitivity and appreciation needed to create and maintain a personal environment; teach young people to organize and manage resources; to use domestic technology; to understand interdependence of the family and community; and to adapt to rapid technological changes and their effect on customs and values in a diverse society.

The assessment should test the ability of all candidates to:

identify the varying human needs and material factors involved in a situation, and apply relevant knowledge;

use investigative procedures to test and compare methods, materials and equipment, to obtain evidence on which to base judgments and choices;

identify and justify priorities, decide on appropriate action, and evaluate the effectiveness of the action.

Exams must test both written and practical work. A range of skills (for example psychomotor, consumer and organizational skills) must be assessed by a practical test, which should make up between 30 and 50 per cent of the final marks.

Written tests should include a balanced selection of techniques such as short answer questions, free response questions, individual study, and written descriptions of practical work. Oral tests are an acceptable complement to other techniques, particularly for schemes focused on the family.

Most of the criteria are in the most general terms, but specific examples of possible syllabuses, on family meals, domestic heating, suitability of clothing, the practical stage in child development, and creative needlecraft, make some of the vaguer concepts more down to earth.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Business studies can be treated in three ways - as a single subject called business studies, a core plus options in accounting or commerce, or as separate single subjects entitled Accounting and Commerce.

All courses should develop relevant skills and techniques, and should encourage group activity within the classroom and direct experience outside it.

The single subject business studies course should, among other things, teach pupils about: the business environment and the working world; the main groups inside and outside business and their influence on each other; business activity in private and public sectors; the organization and finance of business; the control of production; and the significance of innovation and change. It should also develop skills of literacy, numeracy, research, presentation and interpretation.

Candidates will be expected to use appropriate theories and calculations; select and apply data; distinguish between evidence and opinion; make judgments, and communicate accurately and logically.

The choice of topics for the single integrated subject must be more comprehensive than that for the core. As a

minimum, all courses should include topics on the business environment, structure and organization, business behaviour, people in business, and aiding and controlling business activity.

The aims of the accounting course and the assessment objectives should be broadly similar to that of the business studies single subject course, but more closely tied to the role of the basic principles of accounting.

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L.e.a.s compete for Open Tech money



George Tolley: new contracts

Some of Britain's biggest authorities are competing to be chosen as the first Open Tech authorities. They are offering to bring all their colleges into the new national open learning system of technician and management training.

Invitations have gone out to 12 authorities to bid for the six places available in next year's programme. Those chosen will get grants of around £250,000 a year each from the Manpower Services Commission.

A good deal of the MSC money will be spent on greatly improved information and counselling facilities which are likely to produce spin-off benefits for ordinary students.

The Open Tech, unlike the Open University, is not a separate institution but a programme to use colleges, industrial training facilities, correspondence courses and broadcasting to provide novel ways of learning for people who cannot, or do not want to,

take conventional courses. It will also try to make existing courses more accessible. Most of its students are expected to be full-time workers trying to improve their qualifications or skills.

Only authorities with at least 10 colleges have been invited to submit bids - they include Birmingham, Manchester, Devon, Nottinghamshire, and Staffordshire - and most of them are already involved in the other big MSC-funded education programme, the

Technical and Vocational Education Initiative. Inner London, the country's biggest authority, is staying out of the bidding.

Dr George Tolley, director of the MSC's Open Tech unit, says that in some parts of the country individual colleges are already taking part in the OT programme, but the new funding is for authority-wide projects. He expects that contracts will be signed early in the New Year.

The BL robots that can turn out car workers

The Open Tech, seen by many colleges as a big source of new work, may end up taking away a large part of their traditional industrial training role.

The OT is helping to finance a new training system which will replace industrial instructors with teaching machines. Austin Rover, the biggest British-owned car manufacturer which is carrying out the project, believes it will eventually enable it to train apprentices and other young workers without sending them to colleges.

The system developed by Austin Rover, which is part of the BL group, uses a revolutionary combination of computers and video, together with notes and textual material to train students.

At present the system is being used for the kind of training which would normally be carried on inside the company, mainly providing extra skills to adult workers and managers. But Mr Jim O'Mahoney, the technical and management training manager, be-

lieves that everything which is or present taught to apprentices could be learned by them through the new system on the company's own premises.

"All we would need would be the appropriate material, and TEC is already providing some of this in its distance learning system packages," he said. Even life and social skills, suggests Mr O'Mahoney, could be covered by adopting and editing some of the educational and general interest programmes already shown by the main television channels.

The company is getting £320,000 from the OT over the next three years to help pay for the development of the new system, which will cost up to £1m. By 1986 it should be carrying out more than half the company's training at its 11 major plants.

Until now machine teaching systems have made little headway in Britain: the major system on offer is Plato which relies on linking up students to a



An Austin Rover employee uses a computer to program a six-axis robot arm.

huge educational computer in the United States.

Austin Rover says it believes that using their combination of individual mini computers and video is much more flexible and cost effective than any big education computer. It plans to set up training centres at the 11 plants and claims that each centre will be able to train at least 6,000 employees a year.

Each of the 12 training positions in each centre will be equipped with a visual display unit, a television-type screen, and a keyboard. The student is shown video instruction films but can interrupt the commentary to ask questions or to try out ideas. He or

the company says students can learn in one-and-a-half days what would take two-and-a-half by conventional methods. Already, 1,800 Austin Rover managers have been trained by the new system in complex production engineering techniques in only six weeks.

Each of the 12 training positions in each centre will be equipped with a visual display unit, a television-type screen, and a keyboard. The student is shown video instruction films but can interrupt the commentary to ask questions or to try out ideas. He or

Mr O'Mahoney says he cannot see why the system should not find a place in schools and colleges once it has been proved effective in industry. But the machines are likely to find their way into some schools long before there is any educational policy decision to try them out. Austin Rover expects that pupils who at present visit the company's plants to study industrial subjects will in future learn the materials from an Austin Rover program supplied to their schools, provided they have the necessary computer and video equipment.

Edited by Mark Jackson

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No full-time teachers – but good exam results

A small independent girls' boarding school, with no entrance exam, a high proportion of overseas students, and no full-time teachers has won the conditional approval of HM Inspectorate.

Despite certain weaknesses, particularly shortages of books and remedial teaching, the Inspectors find much to praise in Arton Reynold School, Shrewsbury, Shropshire.

The school, opened in 1877, is run by a trust and caters for 81 girls aged 7 to 18, though most are of secondary age.

The Inspectorate says: "Pupils and staff work hard and throughout the work is heavily teacher-directed and undifferentiated in many subjects. The girls achieve pleasing results in most subjects at public examination level."

The boarders seem well adjusted and content, in spite of some urgent deficiencies in the accommodation, particularly a shortage of lavatories. And the girls were welcoming and unfailingly courteous.

But problems arose because of the wide ability range of the pupils, and the fact that all 18 teachers other than the principal were part-timers. However, half the staff were gradu-

HMI reports

HMI reports are available free of charge from the Department of Education and Science, Publications Despatch Centre, 100 Victoria Road, Slough, Middlesex HA7 1AZ. Also available from I.E.A.s.

ates, and all were well-qualified and experienced.

The most serious weakness was that far too much of the week, some fifth-year girls were not being taught. Out of a 44 period week four girls had 14 free periods, three had 12 and five had 10. Some girls also had as many as eight periods of needwork.

Better curriculum planning was needed, says the Inspectorate, with emphasis on "the needs of girls (usually, but not always, of overseas origin) who are unable to follow examination courses". At present these needs were not adequately met.

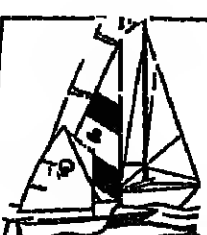
Though the style of teaching was didactic, some examples of open-ended discussion were seen. "However, many lessons lacked pace and variety and pupils were on the whole passive recipients," says the Inspectorate.

Written work was set regularly and was carefully marked with pupils doing a great deal of writing. Reading tasks by contrast were minimal, perhaps because of the shortage of a wide range of reference books.

Standards of work overall were acceptable and in some subjects such as art, and English were good. But exam results in maths, French and German had been disappointing.

The supply of books and equipment varied from subject to subject, but were best well supplied in the library. At the time of the inspection the school was considering buying a complete new series of maths books to cover much of the school's work. This would allow them to acquire books more suitable for low ability-pupils.

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Flavour of history 'stifled by facts'

by Philip Venning

Exam boards were criticized by HMI Inspectorate this week for offering modern world history syllabuses that are so crammed with unnecessary detail that pupils lose sight of the subject.

Both O level and CSE syllabuses in modern world history demanded an immense load of factual detail, the Inspectors say in a report on history teaching in 16 Hampshire secondary schools.

"The intrinsic interest and the essential flavour of history were being squeezed out by all this factual pressure."

Two schools had been forced to start the course a year early to cover all the ground. The report adds: "The con-

ceptual underpinning of such courses appears to be shaky – pupils seemed to be missing the wood for the trees in some cases, able, for example, to describe the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles 1919 or the background to the Munich Crisis, but not able to define the 'Third World' or to describe the effects of technology on twentieth century life."

"To a lesser extent the same complaints could be made about courses in British economic and social history since 1750. But the solution lay with the exam boards rather than the teachers."

With rare exceptions the quality of work and classroom discipline in history were good. The Inspectors saw

lively question and answer sessions, lessons geared to the individual aptitudes of pupils, and work that developed a wide range of skills other than those normally associated with history.

Despite wide variations there were no serious shortages of paper and books, although pupils in two schools were sharing textbooks. But there was a tendency for schools to over-invest in worksheets and handouts.

"It is doubtful whether this expenditure is always economic given the short life span of many handouts and the considerable difficulties of designing and producing high-quality materials," says the report.

In general there was too much

emphasis on writing, much of it verbatim copying from a single textbook or from the blackboard. There was not nearly enough analysis of sources of evidence, and too little use made of primary sources, such as written records, field work, and oral records.

"Most projects done in the schools visited (usually in years four and five) were felt to be too voluminous, tending to be uncritical compilations. Dramatic re-creations of historical events were seen in three schools, though in one the work drifted too far from recorded history."

History in Some Secondary Schools in Hampshire, HMI.

Threatened school wins high praise

by David Lister

A school which a council has earmarked for closure amid considerable local protest has just received a particularly favourable report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

The report of a short inspection of Mountview School, a 12 to 16 comprehensive in Harrow, says it "has good reasons to be pleased with its achievement so far", and is "well staffed with experienced professionals who work conscientiously."

HMI also points out that although Mountview served a "very mixed and multi-ethnic community" there were no signs of tension in the school. "The atmosphere in almost all lessons was good."

Examination results last year were said to be disappointing but the report points out that the school had produced its own leaving certificate which followed a work experience package.

A group has been formed to fight the closure and is citing the HMI report as part of its case. The council has decided to fallow rolls and says a 12 to 16 school with less than 720 pupils is not viable, though a final decision on closure has not yet been made.

Reports were also published last week on Charlfield Primary School, Avon; Caravansal School, South Leeds (now closed); Oakwood Avenue Infant School, Warrington; Rangemore School, Lewes, East Sussex; Warwick Boys' High School, Waltham Forest; St Anne's RC First and Middle School, Harrow; and Studebaker High School, Northwich, Cheshire.

better housed somewhere else. The report also shows that as school rolls fall the number of sixth formers doing A level music in ILEA has fallen to 164. None at all were doing it in one ILEA division.

However, the Inspectors conclude that the overall provision for pupils with musical ability is impressive and provides an appropriate complement to the pupils' musical activities within the school curriculum. Particularly commendable was the experimental CYM project in Tower Hamlets, which gives concentrated instrumental tuition in four primary schools.

A Survey of Aspects of Music Education in ILEA, HMI.

NOTICEBOARD

PEOPLE...

SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS

The London Borough of Richmond has made the following appointments from January: Mrs S. Gurnell to be head of Orleans Infant School; Mrs L. Turner to be head of Stanley Infant School; and Mr R. A. Jones to be head of Trafalgar Junior School.

Mr Richard Tracey, Conservative MP for Sutton, has been appointed Parliamentary Advisor to the Independent Schools Information Service.

COLLEGE APPOINTMENTS
Sir Michael Tippett to be President of the London College of Music.

UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENT
Professor Maurice Craft, chairman of the School of Education, to be Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nottingham.

CONFERENCES...

November 25-27

Castle Priory College is running a training workshop on the use of Portage Teaching Materials. The materials, available from the National Foundation for Educational Research Publishing Company, constitute a method of enabling pupils to teach their own handicapped children in the home. Further details from the Royal Albert Hall in the

details from the Principal, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon.
November 26
Inaugural Conference of the Association of African, Caribbean and Asian Academics from 10.15am until 3.45pm at the Polytechnic of Central London, 35 Marylebone Road, London W1. Further details from the Chairman, Dr P. Figueroa, University of Southampton, Southampton, Hants SO9 5NH. Tel: 0703 599122 ext 351/470.

December 3
Centre for the Study of Comprehensive Schools one-day conference to launch the South-East Regional Group at the London Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1. Speakers: Professor Denis Lawton and George Walker. Further details from Simon Clements, 217 Highbury Quadrant, London N5 2TE.

Luther Quinquennial
The University of Kent at Canterbury is marking the quinquennial of Martin Luther's birth with an exhibition on loan from Germany from November 1-28. It comprises an important collection of reproduction paintings, woodcuts, manuscripts and books.

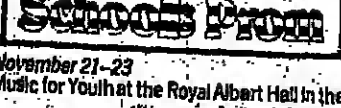
Two open lectures on *The Image of Luther in the German Democratic Republic* by Dr Gerhard E. Müller on November 15 and on *Incomprehensible Luther* by Dr Robert Schnier on November 18 will take place at 6pm in the Cornwell Lecture Theatre.

Natural History Museum
The Krakatoe Centenary Exhibition has been extended to November 30.

A small display of mooses and reindeer will be held in the White Hall Lobby from November 1-30 to mark the diamond jubilee of the British Sociological Society.

Science Museum
Three Hundred Years of the Art of Printing: a small display commemorating the publication of the first technical treatise on printing in 1583: Joseph Moyn's *Mechanic Exercises on the Art of Printing* until after Christmas.

Schools Prom
November 21-23
Music for Youth at the Royal Albert Hall in the



Wrong answers in staffroom lead to crossword prize

by Bert Lodge

When The Teacher's Day piece of research was published a few years ago, Colin Wheeler, the classroom economist, illustrated it with a sketch of a woman teacher beleaguered by at least half a dozen demanding children and crying over their heads to an invisible researcher, "My free time? It's like this only with a sandwich in my hand."

Well life can't be so permanently hectic, not in all staffrooms, not judging by the response to the first staffroom crossword competition run by The TES in its September 23 edition in conjunction with Collins' Dictionaries. The 146 closes demanded a grid as big as a table top yet more than 1,400 entries were received. That amounts to nearly 1.5m individually solved clues.

Not that it took some staffroom teams long to solve them. Mr Martin Dawley, head of English at St Thomas More, Derby, the school whose all-correct solution was first out of the bag, put it in perspective. "The TES was lying around the staffroom and one or two people had filled in answers which were wrong. So I took it home and finished it."

Had it taken him long? "About an hour." It was no surprise to learn he has in the past picked up a prize or two from newspaper competitions in the national leagues. This time, £150 worth of books for his school.

Another in the top six, Wolverhampton Hall, sounding every brick like a

private academy, is an ILEA boarding secondary school. Was the common room (do they have them there?) a crossword hive? "No, we don't get the time," was the terse response of Mr Stuart McPhee, responsible for sending the entry. But he is another who has the odd Observer and Sunday Times win to his credit.

Most effortless beneficiary must be Hamilton primary school, Colchester. The head, Mr John Bouckley, had not even heard of the competition until told over the phone this week his school had won a prize in it: £100 worth of books. The benefactor is Mr Paul Chapman, who took advantage of the rule allowing an entrant not on a school staff to nominate a school to receive any prize that might be won.

Was Mr Chapman the parent of a child at the school? "He's the parent of several," was the short reply.

From the first independent school in the list of winners came a tribute to the crossword compiler, Rufus, our regular. "It was very fair – a good cross-section across the arts and the sciences." This was Mr Martin Rupp, teacher of Latin and French at St Edmund's junior school, Canterbury, where the cathedral's choristers are among the 200 on roll. Behind comes Brookwood Technical College, Weybridge with 3,000 on roll. Should we think about separate leagues based on size of institution next year – or a sliding scale of prize money?

Public opinion against more cuts

by Hilary Wilce

Education spending should be increased if possible, according to two public opinion polls published last week.

Strong opposition was shown to further cuts from all sectors of society. A poll commissioned by the Institute of Directors showed that top businessmen throughout the country considered education the area of public spending that should least be cut.

Only 2 per cent of the 200 institute members, polled by telephone, thought that further government spending cuts should face education. This put education well ahead of the

next area which the businessmen thought should be protected: defence expenditure, which 9 per cent said should be cut, and far and away beyond the most popular urea for increased cuts – the National Health Service.

A wider opinion sample last week also showed strong support for public education.

According to a MORI poll on government spending, commissioned by The Sunday Times, only 6 per cent of people favour more cuts in education funds if public spending cuts are to increase, while 47 per cent think it is an

area where spending should be increased if more money is available. This makes education the third most popular area for protecting expenditure, after pensions and the National Health Service, and the second most popular area for increasing spending after the National Health Service.

Men favour cutting education more than women: 8 per cent as opposed to 3 per cent; while in age terms a predictable pattern emerges. Households with school and pre-school age children strongly support education spending, while older age groups are less enthusiastic.

Lecturers' 3-point claim

by Diane Spencer

Leaders of the largest college lecturers' union have recommended a three-point pay claim to their membership.

The executive of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education is seeking:

- Restoration of living standards;
- Improvement of relativities with university salaries; and
- Creation of a career grade for further education teachers on lecturer scales 1 and 2.

These are the main points of the claim, details of which have been sent to the union's branches this week. A special salaries conference will be held next February.

Last year the union accepted a pay settlement of 4.5 per cent plus £51, although they had asked for £280 plus 12 per cent.

Negotiations remained deadlocked on the structural changes also demanded by the union, including automatic transfer from lecturer Scale 1 and 2 which is part of this year's claim.

THE TIMES Educational Supplement

SCHOOL STAFFROOM CROSSWORD COMPETITION WINNERS

1st prizes

St Thomas More RC School, Derby.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.

2nd prizes

St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.

3rd prizes

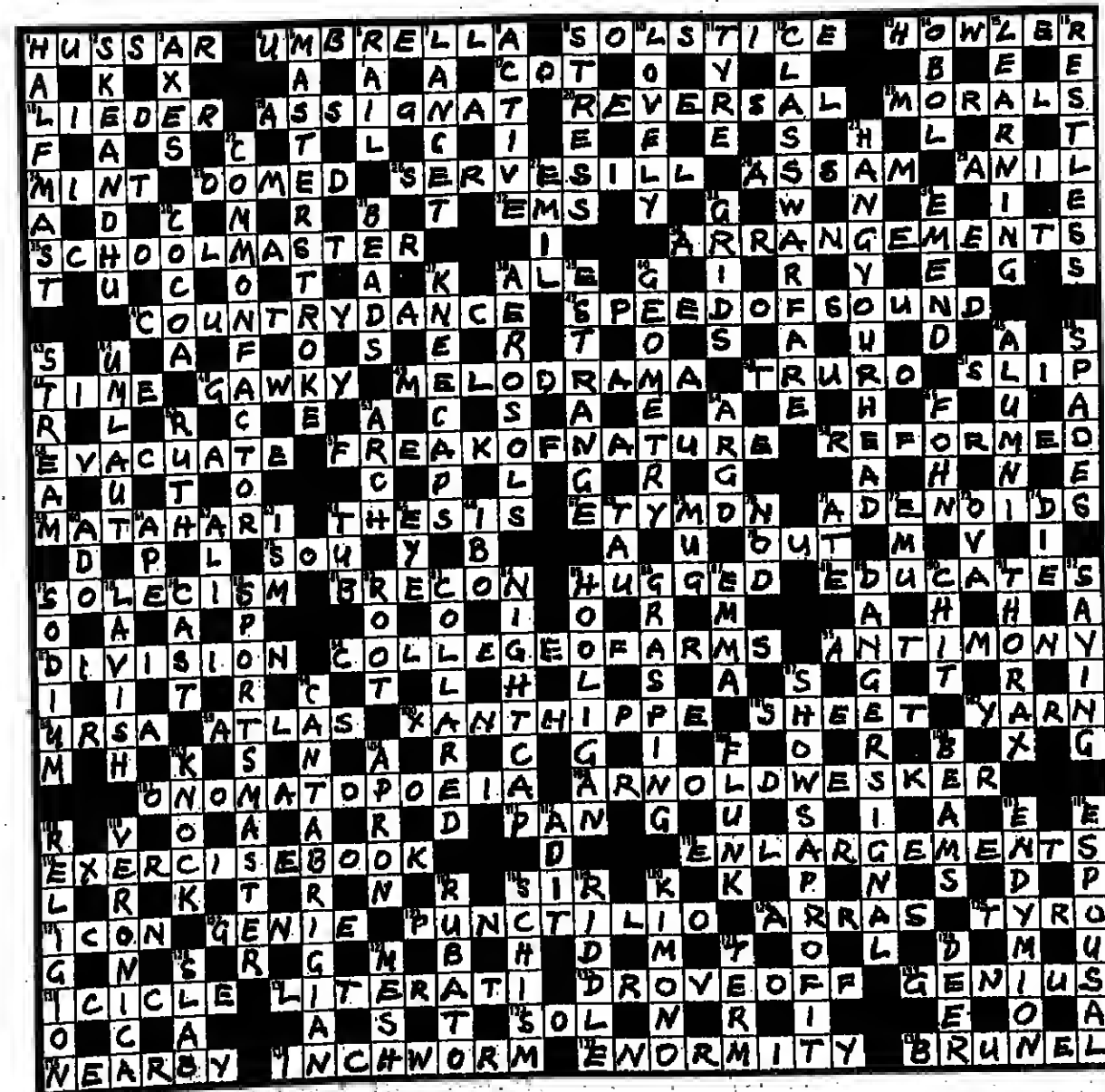
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.

Newquay Tregleas School, Newquay.
Cornwall. St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
St Anne's RC School, Canterbury.
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COLLINS DICTIONARIES



LETTERS

Role of the 'bad' pupil

Sir - The article "Beyond the naughty child" by Sted, Lawrence and Young (TES, October 28) is interesting but it does not go far enough. By trying to focus attention on what the teacher may be doing the authors promulgate the myth of the "incompetent teacher" without really going into the causes of disruptive behaviour in a classroom.

Every teacher knows instinctively that a class is not just a collection of individuals. The class forms a group which has its own identity. What teachers seldom appreciate is that the feelings in a group exert pressures on the members of the group and that these pressures can be considerable. What the authors refer to as "scapegoating" is, in fact, a similar phenomenon called "splitting". This works on the assumption that there is good and bad in everyone, but that children are reluctant to acknowledge the bad parts of themselves and so try to put all their own bad feelings on to one or two individuals in the class who have signalled their willingness to be set up by personal acts of misbehaviour.

The "bad" pupil is, thus, acting out all the badness of the rest of the class. That this is the case is proved by the fact that if the "bad" pupil is finally excluded from the class, a new "bad" pupil arises to fill the same role.



The most "competent" of teachers seldom realize that they, as part of the group they are teaching, are just as vulnerable to group pressures as the children and so may collude in setting up a "naughty" child. In fact, it is often the "strictest" - that is, least sensitive teachers - who are most easily manipulated by such group pressures.

Another factor which operates is the relationship between the hierarchy of the school and the individual teacher. Teachers must carry into the classroom the authority which is vested in the school. If the school hierarchy sees itself as inadequate then the teachers' authority will be diminished.

That some teachers in such a situation succeed in setting up their own authority, based usually on fear and violence, is unhelpful since it results in an attitude of "Blow you Jack, I'm all right".

If classroom disruption is a school-wide phenomenon, such as is the case in inner-city comprehensives, it is up to the school authorities to look at the kind of support they are giving their teachers.

JOE FAJERMAN
31 Hargrave Mansions
Hargrove Road
London N19

Influence of classroom dynamic

Sir - It is heartening to learn there is a growing body of educationalists and teachers who are prepared to recognize that the responsibility for classroom misbehaviour does not rest solely with the students.

I suggest that the effectiveness of the learning process would be greatly enhanced if greater attention and recognition were given to the process of the dynamic between student and teacher. This is not a plea for *laissez-faire*

teaching, but for a more honest appraisal of what elements really contribute to a student's response to a teacher.

It is time for teachers to be open about their fears, problems, difficulties and inadequacies in the classroom.

F WATT
31 Hargrave Mansions
Hargrove Road
London N19

No quota

Sir - As the teacher mentioned by Mark Vaughan (Talkback, TES, October 28), I must answer some points raised in his interesting contribution. Because many issues are at stake, I will confine myself to those most relevant to me.

Of course integration is the ideal goal, but is not every rule reinforced by exceptions? The pupils with whom I am concerned have already been suspended from school after strenuous attempts to solve their problems before they were referred to me. They will not be sent to me if any other school will take them.

I am the first to admit that the curriculum is limited, but anyone who has taught the City & Guilds Foundation Course will agree that it is suited to the needs and interests of this age group. When I say that pupils will not return to high school, this is not an accusation against the system. I merely state the particular role of our unit.

I have close links with another unit where every effort is made to return pupils to mainstream education. If this is not possible by the beginning of the fifth year, they come to us. I would like to know how many 15 to 16-year-olds are successfully reintegrated into high schools after they have already been given fresh starts at other schools, time in the support unit, or time on home tuition, before arriving in a school-leavers unit.

Of course education should not and does not end at 16. I would be delighted to think that one day our pupils will rediscover the pleasure of learning, but right now all they can think of is finishing school and finding a job.

I need hardly add that I teach in a "disruptive unit" because the unit exists. This unit - and the many others in this country - do not owe their existence to my desire to disintegrate schools. After five years in this field, I would like to be integrated into a school again. However, I still feel that for a few pupils, the small unit attempts to tackle the problem of disruptive and disaffected fifth years,

and, in fact, gives them some sense of achievement and responsibility before leaving.

It is unlikely that any of our pupils who gained certificates this year would have done so in their original school, and far from being isolated we are stretching out all the time. Pupils attend link courses at the local tech, they play in a table tennis league, some spend a day a week on work experience or doing voluntary work in the community.

I assure Mr Vaughan that there is no question of each school having a quota of places. We take pupils in the order that we receive the referrals. If we had no referrals we would have no pupils, and I'm sure our education authority would not put out an appeal for referrals but be delighted to redeploy staff until the need arose again. No pupil is forced to come here - parents and pupils must agree that this is what they want. Parents become more involved in this unit than they ever were in the original school.

Surely sanctuaries and havens have always been a positive provision for minority in an unequal world. However, I do owe a debt of gratitude to Mr Vaughan for making me re-examine the role played by our units in secondary education as it exists today.

JANE LOVEY
3 Randolph Road
Epsom
Surrey

Two-way rights

Sir - Mark Vaughan reminds us of the basic right of access to education and the 1944 Education Act's guarantee of full-time education. Perhaps he can inform us whether he or the Act have anything to say about the responsibilities and obligations of those who wish to benefit by this right. If not, may I suggest that this is a serious oversight in both cases.

G B CORRIE
21 The Ridge Way
Kenton
Newcastle upon Tyne

of institutions, could not be met in the time available.

While we would not wish to pretend that these demands will be easily met, the authority and the participating institutions remain committed to the original proposal and will seek to implement the consortium in September 1984. Meanwhile, it is totally misleading to suggest as you did on your front page, that the consortium arrangements may never in fact come to fruition.

The length of the contractual negotiations which I would point out, were only concluded in August, was also chiefly responsible for the fact that the limited plans to admit students to the agriculture/horticulture scheme at 16 were unsuccessful, though, in contrast, recruitment at 16-plus to the courses mounted at the college of art and design and the sixth-form college has,

In fact, been better than anticipated. This important point was unfortunately omitted from the report.

Publicly about the availability of the new courses to fifth-year pupils who had already left school was a major problem, which the authority will not have to face in 1984.

Sex stereotyping and the need to avoid premature career choice are acknowledged problems faced by all TVEI authorities including Barnsey and it is right that attention should be focused upon them. Under the circumstances, however, given that the scheme is still in its infancy, it seems to me to be premature to attempt to draw any definitive conclusions about what has been attempted so far by individual authorities.

TREVOR BROOKS
Education Officer
Barnsey

TVEI rebuke

Sir - I should like to correct some of the false impressions which some of your readers may have formed from reading Philip Venning's article on Barnsey's TVEI pilot project (TES, October 14).

The fact that submissions were only approved in March, and that protracted negotiations were required before final agreement could be reached with the Manpower Services Commission on the terms of the TVEI contract, has meant that it has been impossible to deliver the authority's proposal in its entirety in the first year of the scheme's operation.

The MSC has appreciated the authority's pilot but the logistical demands of the consortium arrangement, which necessitates a high degree of cooperation between a large number

Making the grades

Sir - It is sad to see Colin Vickerman, as secretary of the most open of the GCE boards, writing so misleadingly about aspects of A level grading (TES, October 21).

It is not true that the narrowness of grade C is due solely to bunnymen teachers being reluctant to award marks at either extreme. As the JMB document shows, in 1982 its narrowest grade C band (2.9 per cent) was in chemistry syllabus A, and in at least seven other "science" examinations, including pure mathematics with statistics, computer studies, chemistry syllabus B and biology, the difference between grade B and D was 1/2 in 6 per cent.

The truth is that boards have made little effort to insist on sensible distributions of marks because their grade boundaries are secret. The JMB's decision to publish these in 1984 is very welcome.

More important, it is not true that boards must follow the 1960 guidelines by which 70 per cent of candidates are supposed to pass each A level examination, with the top 10 per cent receiving grade A, the next 15 per cent grade B, and so on. As the JMB booklet points out, these are "no more than rough indications" and boards

have, from the start, ignored them if they wish.

For example, in the June examinations for English Literature A level 1977-82, the JMB passed 69 per cent of candidates on average; but London passed only 64 per cent; while the AEB passed 77 per cent. The AEB now passes over 13 per cent more of its English A level candidates than London.

Moreover, the JMB awarded grade A to 10.2 per cent of its English A level candidates over the same period; but London and AEB only 5.4 and 5.6 per cent respectively.

Therefore, a London or AEB grade A in English is nearly twice as valuable as a JMB grade A, and so on. Striking variations between boards occur in other grades and in many other subjects.

I wonder whether university admissions tutors are aware of these variations and make allowances for them. If not, their reliance on A level grades alone for admission purposes is even more farcical than one had imagined.

LAURIE SMITH
Head of School
Hollyfield School
Surrey

Baton charge

Sir - Your interesting piece about the first two days of our "Going Communities" training programme in the TES of October 21 spoke of Coventry's "passing of the community school baton" to Newham. May I point out that baton was being passed from about eight I.E.A.s which are contributing to the programme. We are an independent charitable trust and, as such, we bring in expertise from wherever it is appropriate.

You mention also that we have talked to three other - "all Labour-controlled" - authorities. We have, in fact, spoken to dozens and many of them are not Labour controlled. Community education and community schools are far from being the preserve of one political party - ask Devon!

Of course we are grateful for your coverage since it draws attention to the rapidly increasing number of I.E.A.s which are seeking the sense of turning traditional establishments into community schools.

JOHN RENNIE
Director
Community Education
Development Centre
Bristol Road
Coventry

Why Warnock fails to recognize the music case

Sir - I was sad to see Mary Warnock, of all people, taking up the case for allowing parents to pay for a subject that for over three decades has been considered as justifying a place in the general curriculum (TES, October 28). I wonder how many of the parents whom she claims are demanding that instrumental tuition be provided by the State at the charge of the unemployed or lower paid members of our society.

Mary Warnock suggests that it is the "moderately talented, the 'ordinary' child, who is most likely to suffer when things are bad". I am sorry she does not go on to define what she means by the "ordinary" child but I would like to point out that there are a number of ordinary, or less than ordinary children academically, who become quite extraordinary when they discover that they have a special talent for music.

Such children also discover that they have a special need for it. At least half of the most talented children we have produced in Leicestershire were once ordinary in the academic sense and at least half of those were ordinary in the sense that they were not sufficiently affluent to pay for good lessons. And has Mary Warnock ever considered the cost of purchasing instruments?

Presumably she holds some sort of ideology concerning equality of opportunity which leads her to think that instrumental teaching is less essential to educational provision than to quote her example, modern languages. Like most subjects, it is more essential for some people than others. The question therefore is not whether instrumental teaching should be provided but to what extent it should be provided, particularly in relation to classroom music.

The fact that many I.E.A.s have refused their peripatetic instrumental teachers and never charged for the teaching indicates that it is not necessary to abolish instrumental teaching. What is necessary is for the Government with music in education to recognize their needs and rationalize their priorities in a more cogent way than has been the case in the past.

It seems to me that the greatest error, in these stringent times, is to discuss methods and strategies before issues have been clearly defined. Throughout my working life I have had



Instrumental tuition: a private or public cost?

three fundamental aims:
□ To create awareness of the power of music as a resource for the emotions (the classroom);
□ To encourage the practice of the art of music (the classroom and the instrumental service);
□ To enable all children to have the opportunity for proving talent and ability in music and then to provide the means for them to achieve their fullest potential in the subject (the instrumental service).

I see no reason to depart from these aims though I do see a need to re-think the deployment of human resources. I can only think that Mary Warnock genuinely believes that all those with musical talent have parents who are able to pay for lessons. She is quite wrong - and if she does not believe me she is welcome to spend a week at the Leicestershire School of Music to find out.

Her recipe is one for disaster: a gradual return to the state of musical education before the Second World War, which she describes with such devastating accuracy.

PETER FLETCHER
Principal Music Adviser and Principal
Leicestershire School of Music

A right to instrumental lessons

Sir - Mary Warnock has again raised the question of the legality of charging parents for instrumental lessons in school. I strongly disagree with her opinion that such payments should be made legal.

The basic flaw in her argument is the unjustified assumption that there exists a greater natural right to lessons in modern languages than to instrumental tuition. It is not conceivable that violin tuition for an interested child might be more valuable to that child than unframed French lessons? Surely parents would not have to pay, over and above existing tax rates, for a subject of such importance to their child.

If part-payment for instrumental tuition is introduced into schools, I would estimate that at least two-thirds of pupils would drop out - a high price

to pay for a relatively small financial saving. Even the total abolition of free instrumental tuition in schools would be of little benefit to other subjects compared with damage to the curriculum balance, because the cost of instrumental provision, even in the most generous of I.E.A.s, is only a tiny fraction of total staffing costs.

It is, therefore, either obvious or inevitable that I.E.A.s should cease to provide free instrumental instruction in schools in the present financial circumstances.

HUGH MAGEE
Hon Secretary
Hounslow Association Peripatetic Instrumental Teachers
78 Will Crescent
Hounslow
Middlesex

PE concern

Sir - I am a fourth-year physical education student at the Chelsea School of Human Movement, Brighton Polytechnic. I am, along with many of my fellow students, slightly shocked at the article by Richard O'Connor, "Detention centres possible for PE teachers" (TES, October 28).

While any move to integrate "offender" back into mainstream society is to be welcomed, why has PE been singled out? It is a long-standing teachers' subject, involving a wide range of activities, and it is the same

academic standards. For too long PE has, along with other "non academic" subjects, been the "Cinderella" of the teaching profession.

It is our business to educate the whole child and thus the physical education of primary school children is equally important as other areas.

If any move to integrate these "young offenders" into the education system is to be undertaken, let it be across the whole spectrum.

RICHARD WHITTINGTON
Chelsea School of Human Movement
(Falmers)
Brighton Polytechnic

Chopping logic

Sir - It was sad to learn from Trevor Eaton's letter (TES, October 28) that the London GCE Board is to abolish the A level examination in logic, because it is not financially viable. I believe with him that a course in logic does lead to a marked improvement in the intellectual skills the pupil brings to other subjects.

There is a case for it being more widely taught. As the late Nathan Isaacs cogently argued "We all agree that arithmetic is one of the great basic subjects which everyone should be taught. But why is not logic recognized as equally basic... Indeed even reading and writing, to say nothing of arithmetic, would be of little use if we could not back them up with some grasp of logic and the demands of valid reasoning" (New Light on Children's Ideas of Number, ESA 1960 p31).

With this in mind I carried out some years ago an experiment in teaching logic to 9 to 10-year-olds in schools in Blackpool and Manchester, using an adapted version of Lewis Carroll's Game of Logic (cf. "Logic in the Primary School", TES, September 27). I found that the children took well to the subject and that there was a marked improvement in their intellectual readiness and ability to reason. In a few cases children were better able to handle logical material than some university students of my acquaintance.

Not only do children of this age profit from such instruction, but as Trevor Eaton clearly shows, older pupils also benefit. If more logic was taught no doubt more candidates would take it at A level, and it might become financially viable. However, financial viability is not an adequate criterion of a subject's educational value.

WOLFE MAYS
Institute of Advanced Studies
Manchester Polytechnic

Worth reflecting

Sir - May I endorse Trevor Eaton's lament that the University of London GCE Board is intending to abolish A level logic on financial grounds since human nature being what it is, if there is no examination, then very soon there will in all likelihood be no subject.

I suspect that lack of takers indicates a lack of interest and/or qualified teachers - a situation that will not be improved by getting rid of the A level examination.

To the virtues of the syllabus add expounded by Mr Eaton I would add only this: that it is necessary in a civilized society that at least some of its members be taught to reflect seriously and systematically on the nature and entitlements of existence; and while the A level logic syllabus in itself does less than that, it nevertheless affords an important entrée to areas of thought that do.

Mr Eaton's letter seems to have exposed a gap in the curriculum that, officially speaking, nobody cares about. I hope that the London GCE Board can be persuaded to stay its hand; and that an appropriate initiative in the form of INSET will not be long in coming.

DR C A BUTLER
Head of English
Borden Grammar School
Sittingbourne
Kent

Little appeal

Sir - A comment is necessary on the letter from Mr. Eaton concerning the University of London GCE Board's decision to withdraw its A level logic examination from June 1986.

The board regrets any adverse implications for the very few candidates involved (48 in June 1983) but it was clear that the examination in its present form was not proving attractive to teachers and candidates, quite apart from the financial implications to the board.

LAURENCE PATEMAN
Mathematics and logic subject officer
The University Entrance and School Examinations Council
University of London

Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible and typed on one side of the paper only. The Editor reserves the right to cut or amend them.

Foreign ways

Sir - As the writer of the original article about foreign language assistants "Is the Gome worth the candle?" I was, of course, interested to see how Mr Paddy Carpenter had riposted with his own title "Le feu en vaut la chandelle" (Extro, TES, October 28).

The assistantship scheme, for the actual administration of which CBEVE deserves every admiration, is to be evaluated within the context of native speakers in the classroom. The question is not so much whether it has done some good as whether it has done enough good. The benefit that the scheme brings to modern language degree courses must surely be understood as secondary to the classroom situation.

First hand experience of "foreignness" could in the future be given to language pupils in several ways:

● Enhanced teacher exchange schemes so providing a sabbatical abroad for every language teacher in the European Community;

● Increased frequency of pupil exchanges, so that as far as practical an exchange became an integral part of the language syllabus; and

● Assistantships on the model I have proposed in my article, for trainee teachers prior to their PGCE year. The best assistants from France or Germany are generally the *capitaines* or the *Referendaires*.

Mr Carpenter wonders if I had described the problems confronting our assistants. The fact is that we went to great lengths to eliminate the worries that a young foreigner might feel; we arranged board and lodging, made him welcome in our common room, provided teaching resources and ideas and still left room for initiative. With one distinguished exception, we deserved better of the scheme than we obtained.

There remains the matter of the year abroad in a degree course. I hope that the research team investigating lan-

guage acquisition by British assistants while abroad will undertake an exercise to compare their results with those achieved by undergraduates who spend a year at a foreign university, or in some industrial placement.

I am sure others know more than I do about the political mood in treasurer's departments of I.E.A.s at the present. My own reading of the situation is that the present assistantship scheme is declining, and urgently needs revamping.

ANTHONY EARL
Head of Modern Languages
Eltham College

Local difficulty

Sir - Unfortunately the uninvited appearance of an "r", changing "counties" into "countries" distorted the point I was trying to articulate in an article on the Language Assistants Scheme written for the Foreign Language Teaching Extra.

I was quoting a modern languages adviser in an authority which no longer employs assistants who was lamenting the fact that although his county no longer undertook any "reciprocal arrangements with France, Germany and Spain" it still wished to benefit from the scheme by employing British teachers who had spent a year as assistants in those countries.

As a country, the UK has a number of exchange arrangements not only for assistants but also for serving teachers who can exchange their posts for six weeks, a term or a year. I trust you can turn this back into a local problem with national implications by printing this letter.

PADDY CARPENTER
Deputy Director
Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges
Seymour Mews House
Seymour Mews
London W1

Courses

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(318)

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TALKBACK

Mad on maths

DAVID HAWTHORN

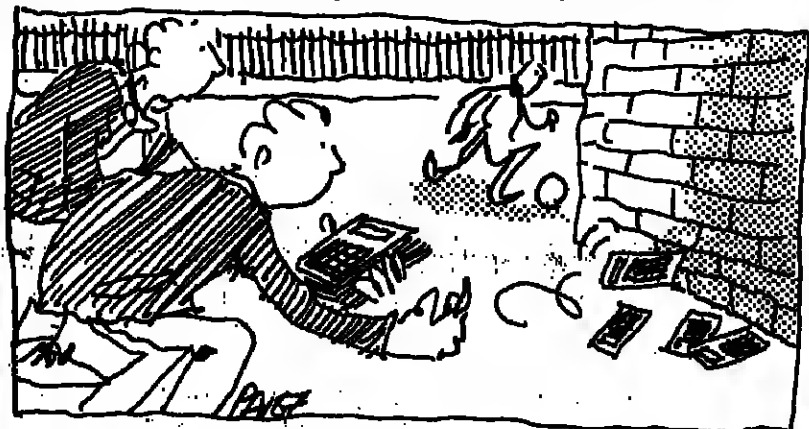
What do the pupils think about their curriculum, or rather the subjects they take? Do they like what we give them as a core curriculum, do they not like it, or are they indifferent?

As part of a greater project studying the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school, third and fourth year primary and first, second and third year secondary pupils were asked which subjects they liked and which they did not like.

The first point to arise was the apparent popularity of mathematics contrary to public belief, overall just over half (51.8 per cent) said they liked maths. However, one third (32.2 per cent) said they did not like maths and it is interesting that well over three-quarters (83 per cent) of the children thus actually commented on maths. This is a lot higher than the total comment for other subjects, (English: 71.2 per cent; history/geography: 76.8 per cent; science: 66.4 per cent; PE and games: 79 per cent; and for the secondary school only, foreign language: 70.3 per cent).

It would appear that with mathematics not many pupils are neutral, in the primary school through the transfer and then in the secondary school they either definitely like maths (which the majority do), or definitely do not like maths.

One rather startling result was the sudden change in the third year secondary girl's choice, as only one third said they liked maths and over half that they did not, in contrast to other years.



Although there was no sudden change in other subjects, it does raise the question - is this the age at which the girls really start to show their dislike for or disenchantment with maths? Maths again shows, along with English, another unexpected result, in connection with remedial pupils. They will have been studying English and maths for up to six years when they transfer to the secondary school, which would by most definitions of a "remedial" pupil have been years devoid of success and possibly enjoyment.

However, a surprising 60 per cent of the remedial pupils stated they liked English, only 7.5 per cent did not, and 47.5 per cent stated they liked maths, 24.5 per cent stating they did not. The practical subjects that according to popular theory, let the remedial pupils use their hands do not receive the same support. Woodwork was eighth in popularity and metal-work ninth, out of 15 subjects, both were liked by less than one third of the remedial pupils.

But it was the pupils deemed to be "mildly retarded" (according to the Rutter form filled in by form teachers) who showed a real preference for maths. This preference being present in all three years of the secondary school studied.

The mathematics quotients for this group (57-128, from the Vernon Graded Mathematics/Arithmetic Test) show that there is a complete range. It includes pupils from the remedial classes through to the top A band.

It should, of course, be stressed that these are the views of pupils from just one secondary school. But they give a little food for thought to teachers and educational planners alike.

David Hawthorn is head of special education at Queen's Comprehensive School, Newport, Gwent.

Failing in language

RICHARD OLIVER

Ask a Dutchman or a Scandinavian how it is he speaks English so well, and the answer will often be "I did it at school"; ask a tongue-tied Englishman why he cannot ask the way in France, and he will use the same answer to explain an opposite result!

Despite excellent work done in some schools since the mid 1960s, there is no doubt that the average Englishman's ability and attitude regarding foreign languages is still appalling. There are probably two main reasons for this.

First, there is the lack of serious thought in many schools about aims and objectives. Pronouncements on "the best way of teaching languages" are quite irrelevant while aims remain vague. The more enlightened have long since realized that endless recitations of irregular verbs are not the best preparation for using the language in a practical or fluent way. But is "learning to speak the language" a sufficient justification for the inclusion of modern languages on the curriculum?

On the other hand, do those who say the language can never be properly understood without careful study of grammar, understand what their objectives really are?

The problem is that most modern language teachers have come through the grammar-based process themselves, and feel uneasy unless they have explained a whole pattern; for example, rather than letting a pupil become accustomed to producing *Je suis* in response to *es-tu* many of us prefer to make the class first learn the whole present tense of *être*. This method produces a reversed thinking process from which all but the very able will never recover.

Modern languages justify their presence in the school curriculum with a variety of aims, and I suggest below an order of priority. How far one goes down the list will depend on the ability of the pupils concerned:

- Awareness and understanding of the lifestyles and attitudes of other cultures.
- Basic practical conversation and letter writing.
- Audio comprehension and fuller oral skills.
- Reading comprehension and writing.



ing skills.

- Translation
- Grammatical awareness.

If, as is all too often the case, the list is taken in reverse order, points 1 and 2 will never be satisfactorily reached by the majority, thus destroying any interest or enjoyment they might have had.

The second obstacle, and perhaps the more blameworthy, is that the majority of GCE boards seem equally vague as to precisely what they are testing. There are a few happy exceptions; those boards who offer an alternative syllabus seem to be trying to give greater stress to testing practical competence, and the Associated Examining Board has done some particularly good work in this direction.

However, the fact remains that students are going to universities - even with grade A at A level - writing the language accurately and expert in literary criticism, but incapable of using the language practically. As for culture, they are often aware only of the plot and style of four set texts which may or may not convey the true pulse of the country concerned.

Of course many students do go up

with a knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the culture of the country whose language they are studying, but this will have been achieved because of the pupil's own interest followed up on the side the exam syllabus, and, regrettably, often outside the classroom.

Perhaps GCE boards should look at what the Institute of Languages covers, or else universities should accept the Institute's Certificate as an alternative to A level. This would then have students coming with a sound knowledge of the language and its people, as well as a degree of competence in oral and written skills. This is because the institute seems to have given proper thought to aims, and seen the essential link between cultural awareness and language skill development.

Too many GCE boards are perpetuating the previous generation's obsession with testing esoteric practical abilities, at the expense of an important linguistic knowledge and skills, and merely pay lip-service to the need for testing of practical usage.

Richard Oliver is head of Spanish at Brentwood School, Essex.

FEATURES

In confidence

Gordon Campbell reveals some of the outrageous things heads write on UCCA forms

University admissions tutors enjoy the rare privilege of reading countless examples of a little-known literary genre: the head-teacher's confidential report. A few examples will serve to indicate the literary heights to which some heads rise: "Robinson has certain difficulties of communication which are not aided by the fact that he always speaks with at least three fingers of his right hand thrust deep into his mouth"; "Kinwood is a cross between Eeyore and a Victorian writer"; "Natasha bears a striking resemblance to Queen Victoria"; "Smyth consists of two blobs. The large one underneath is suggestive of his sloth and his gluttony; the tiny one on top is said to contain a brain".

Of course, not all heads manage to coin such memorable phrases; indeed, some reports are cast in primitive English: "Jones is bright. Popular with the boys. Liked by his teachers. Able sportsman. Visits an old lady on Saturday morning". Other reports are filled with illiterations; the charitable reading of such reports suggests the writers were too busy to read them after they were typed.

Many heads ignore the guidelines for writing reports, and instead describe what seems to them important. Good citizenship is sometimes paraded at such length that I begin to wonder whether the candidate has any time for intellectual pursuits.

Occasionally heads choose to comment on posture, apparently in the belief that uprightness of body reflects moral and intellectual rectitude. Others communicate little more than their lust for the candidate ("Linda is an attractive and well-formed young lady, sometimes inclined to pout") or their racial prejudices ("Fabian comes from a West Indian family which seems indifferent to higher education").

A surprising number of heads argue that allowance should be made for the poor education which the candidate has received at his school; clearly such reports are not made available to other members of staff. In order to protect the guilty I have combined morsels from several similar reports: "When I took over as head last year I inherited a very unhappy situation. Until 1976 this school was a secondary modern, and when it became comprehensive the existing staff were given all the senior posts, even though many of them lacked the requisite qualifications and skills. For obvious reasons none of these people has moved on to another job, and because they occupy our quota of scaled posts, my predecessor was able to make only a few very junior appointments, and not all of these were wise choices. My predecessor allowed heads of department to choose their own examining boards, and most chose to stay with the AEB, with which they were familiar from secondary modern days; we have also been infatuated with Nuffield science. These decisions can hardly be said to be of assistance to potential university candidates. In short, neither the teaching nor the material taught reaches an acceptable standard, and I hope that you will take these factors into account when assessing Tracey's application."

The size of the space provided for the report presents problems for heads who have little to say. One of the more ingenious solutions to this problem is to have one's secretary lay out the page as a grid, listing qualities in a vertical column, and grades from one to ten across the top. The headteacher then fills in the form with a series of ticks, and I am left wondering how I should interpret Teresa's grade 3 for neatness of dress, grade 5 for truthfulness, and grade 6 for intellectual potential; presumably she is a well-dressed drowsy morose.

One of the most telling aspects of the report is the comment on the O level grades, especially if the column of results is an uninspiring mixture of Bs, Cs and Ds. A skilled head can talk his way around such results by emphasizing that young Harley-Jones went through a domestic upheaval when his parents separated while he was preparing for his O levels, and that in any case he is a clear example of the late developer.

By contrast, an unskilled head either ignores the results and insists doggedly on the genius of the candidate, or insists that such results constitute a splendid set of O level passes. On forms destined for Oxbridge as well as the provinces the prudent head adds that his candidate will be a good college man, and alludes to the family tradition. There is some evidence to suggest that on such applications it is also helpful to mention that the candidate's father is a philanthropist or a royal personage.

Gordon Campbell is an admissions tutor at Lancaster University.



Staff development

Ivan Marks describes how heads should help teachers to plan a career now there are fewer opportunities for promotion

thought, planning and time. It is an area which is neglected at colleges, and once someone has acquired one post it is assumed that he/she will have the qualities to make further applications. Everyone should keep a personal file on themselves containing a curriculum vitae, which needs regular updating, copies of previous applications and brief notes of extra experiences. The letter of application should be carefully planned to be between two and four sides of A4 paper. It should basically be in two parts: your experience to date which fits you for the next post, and after careful reading of the job description, the way you would address yourself to the new post.

Having advised some of my staff in the past about their letters of application for other jobs, the major faults I have seen are a serious under-selling of themselves and writing in too much detail about one particular point, which gives a very limited view of the applicant. The letter must have a number of interesting points which the applicant would like to follow up in discussion at the interview.

If you are called for interview you must feel pleased that your letter of application has been successful (remember to keep a copy). I offer to all my staff who are called for interview an opportunity to discuss the interview before they go. It is important that preparations are made. Don't just expect to be able to sit and answer the questions without having given some thought beforehand.

At this preliminary discussion I suggest that the candidate looks through the job description again, underlining the key areas which are likely to be discussed, eg syllabus is based upon School Council project, team-teaching is an important part of the organization, pupils are from an education priority area. Take a copy of your letter of application along, note the areas about which you are likely to be asked further details and prepare your thoughts on these. Answers to questions should be limited to three minutes; stop the interviewee getting "carried away"; an

egg-timer can be very useful. I tend to talk with the applicant on two or three areas to see how they react and also to see what preparations have already been made. As in examinations, I would not advise question spotting and model answers being rehearsed, but certainly preparation will pay off. There are bound to be difficult questions to answer, so stop and give them due thought. A measured answer is better than a hurried, confused reply. On the day of the interview allow plenty of time to get to the school. It is better to travel the evening before and stay overnight than to leave at 5 am to drive some distance. Always arrive outside the school before the children, you will gain a lot of information about the school by watching the way and time that children arrive. Most schools will give candidates a tour of the school, when your observation needs to be particularly alert. It is difficult to remember all that you see so make some notes as you go; it is also an opportunity to ask questions rather than to produce a prepared list at the end of the interview.

When the order of interviewing has been decided, make use of the toilet as a quiet place where you can re-read your observations. At points end-consider your list of observations. Let the interview sit comfortably in the chair and look at the person who is asking the questions, and if the question is vague ask for some clarification. Let your enthusiasm flow and in your answers ensure that your strengths are covered.

After the interview if you are not offered the post, make a list of the questions you were asked and discuss them with your own head afterwards; you should learn from the experience. If the interviewers offer advice, make use of the opportunity. I think it is an important part of interviewing that applicants should be given some feedback.

Ivan Marks is headmaster of Walsley Crag School, Reading.

Cheap labour

ANONYMOUS

In my opinion the new Youth Training Scheme is exactly the same as the old Youth Opportunities Programme. I think it is just a way of keeping down the unemployment figures. Maybe if the Government spent less money on nuclear weapons and stopped losing money because of the EEC, then more jobs could be created in areas of high unemployment.

Of what I have experienced so far on the YTS it is just like being back at school in the first year. We are starting off again with the basics instead of being taught more advanced adult work. As for the point of work experience, well maybe it is useful but what if

you haven't got a job at the end of it? That year on the YTS could have been spent trying to find a more permanent job.

By the end of the first year of the YTS there will be thousands of youths like myself applying for one job, all with the same qualifications and certificates, which will not be of any use because everyone will be equally skilled.

If you do get a work experience job then you will be lucky if you last much longer than your year on the scheme, because in my view most employers just take you on because:

- (a) they don't have to pay you; and
- (b) after the first year another YTS student can fill your place.

If anyone reading this wonders why I am on a training scheme it is because the money is better than Social Security and it is slightly less boring.

The author is on a YTS plastering course.

Christian Schiller

CHRISTOPHER JARMAN



Many teachers remember with great affection those men and women of stature who have influenced them. The late Christian Schiller is surely one who has inspired enormous respect, even devotion amongst thousands of primary teachers whose lives he touched.

After Schiller died in 1976, Christopher Griffin-Baile was able to put together a memorial volume of his talks and memoranda from a suitcase full of notebooks. This was published in 1979 by A and C Black through the private subscriptions of over 250 friends and colleagues.

Christian Schiller's influence was individual and personal. When he spoke of his observations and experiences in schools he spoke directly to the listener. During his lifetime he believed in the spoken word much more than in the written. The book, *His Own Words*, was intended as a

aide memoire to those of us who had heard him speak and who wished to recall those words.

Since 1979 however, copies of the book have become prized possessions. They have become sources of pertinent and powerful quotes, truths about the education of young children.

Parents and teachers who never knew the man have become enthralled by his ideas. Christian Schiller's ideas were not hypothetical, however, they were always based upon his first-hand observations of the way real children at home and in schools developed.

He watched and listened to their talk and play. He saw and heard children in the same way that all teachers and parents do. The difference was that he also remembered what he heard and saw, and helped others to see the significance of the observations.

On top of that he was supremely tactful. He allowed his own students to grow and to believe that they had made their achievements themselves.

He once wrote: "The headmaster of the best junior school I have ever known said this 'I always say to teachers, leave the children alone until they need help; but remember that they probably won't come and tell you when that moment comes. To seize that moment is the art of teaching young children'."

This year is the twentieth anniversary of Christian Schiller's retirement from his last job as senior lecturer at the London University Institute of Education. NAPE, the National Association for Primary Education, is marking this anniversary by publishing a paperback edition of *His Own Words*. Anyone who would like to order a copy may do so by sending a cheque for £3.50 to Christopher Jarman, Editor, NAPE Journal, Whitlands College, West Hill, Putney, London SW15 3SN. Cheques payable to NAPE.

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Enquiries are invited from teachers interested in forming a party of 10 pupils to visit an American high school at Easter for 4 weeks.

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Alarmed...

When the word gets round that schools are protected, intruders find easier pickings says Alastair Buchan



Break-ins at schools can be traumatic: work ripped off walls; displays destroyed; paint, ink and worse smeared across classrooms; pets killed; and lessons lost because vital equipment has been stolen or smashed.

It can all be cleaned up and made good but the effect on staff and pupils lingers. More drops and children lose their respect for school and the vandalism increases.

And it is getting worse. Break-ins at schools have risen dramatically over the last three years. In a straw poll of local authorities, all reported an increase in the number of illegal entries - in one case it had nearly doubled in three years.

Nine could put a figure on the cost of replacing stolen equipment, repairing damage to buildings or overtime and administration. At least three separate budgets were usually involved and accounting procedures did not allow for the costs to be brought together. Any figure is no more than a guess.

Some idea of the amounts involved is given by one authority which has set aside £60,000 to replace stolen equipment and expects related repairs to be around £250,000 this financial year. All that can be said with any certainty is that nationwide the true figure runs into many millions of pounds.

Burglary is first cousin to vandalism. An increase in theft is nearly always associated with a rise in wanton damage that, in turn, attracts more theft. The idea that you can reduce vandalism by educating the vandal in socially acceptable behaviour falls down because it has no effect on the thief who works to an order or who is after a video to sell in the pub.

It is a vicious circle Gateshead has been trying to break. The problems are considerable. Too often schools are isolated in their own grounds; they have large areas of vulnerable glass, there are too many dark corners for glue-sniffers and vandals to lurk in and not a really secure lock or cupboard in the entire building.

Security should be incorporated in a school at the design stage but that is a lesson for the future. The reality is a soft, indefensible building that would hardly stop a five-year-old with a plastic screwdriver.

Yet schools are filling up with videos, micro-computers and all sorts of other attractive, easily disposable goodies. The only surprise is that we are surprised when they are pinched.

Security patrols (in some cases amateurs from the Manpower Services Commission) are popular, but they are only trawling with a net that is as good as the interval between patrols: too long and they are not worth the bother; too close together and the costs go through the roof.

Gateshead's approach has been to create an alarmed base inside the school and link it to the police via a central control. Within each base and protected by the alarms is a secure store for that attractive equipment. The alarms and the secure store come as a package. No school gets one without the other.

In older schools it is usually possible to upgrade an existing store. In newer schools walls and sometimes even floors and ceilings need upgrading. It can be done but the cost is prohibitive.

Gateshead's solution was to develop a steel security vault. It is about the size of three filing cabinets and provides protection approaching the level of an office safe. At the price of a video it is a cost-effective solution to a difficult problem.

It also met the demand for dispersed security. In secondary schools, a half-hide like carrying a video is not popular with teachers.

Heads made it clear that while they liked the idea of secure stores, one serving several teaching blocks was just not on. Extending the alarmed base to create more security was financially out of the question but the vault was so robust it could be used anywhere in a school. Heads were invited to choose their own locations.

So far the signs are that the package is working. Break-ins this year are 15 in 20 per cent down on 1982 - the first time there has been a fall and the only type of crime in Gateshead down on last year's figures.

Sometimes the results are dramatic. In one primary school break-ins dropped from one a week to one a year. At another school the caretaker roused by the alarm bells found the school already surrounded by police. It is the sort

of response that discourages villains and vandals. With an eye to the future the basic alarm system is designed for easy extension and research is going on to find some system of visibly marking equipment as council property.

Even with the vaults secure storage cannot be provided for all the equipment in a school. But if it were all boldly branded then it becomes another problem for a thief to overcome. Make it difficult and thieves will move to greener pastures. They do not want a challenge. They are after easy pickings.

The snag with branding is that it must be easy to apply but difficult or impossible to remove or deface, and it must be cost effective. So far it looks like it ought to be possible for around 10p an item. On a £300 video it makes sense.

As schools move into the micro age their attraction to villains after easy loot will increase. With them will come the vandal. It is impossible to keep them out. No school will ever be able to claim it is burglar or vandal-proof, but developing a simple, cost-effective deterrent which slows them down is worth the effort.

Alastair Buchan is an assistant education officer in Gateshead.

...but not despondent

Sara Parker looks at a project which makes pupils responsible for their own environment



What is happening at Blaydon, just across the River Tyne from Newcastle, is a far cry from the sort of anonymous development in other inner city areas, marked by slogans scrawled on walls, wrecked bus shelters and vandalized public buildings.

The idea that children are more likely to respect and improve their environment if they help to create it also occurred to Harry Ridley, the school's head of art. Over the past two years he has been developing environmental work from the first to the sixth-form. His most ambitious project so far - to develop waste areas, in the school - involves a group of fourth-formers, whom he describes as "the non-examination kids, the potential vandals".

A group of 10 pupils started by identifying three areas which they felt needed improvement. Blaydon comprehensive is a motley collection of stone, red brick and modern buildings, and portacabins in a potentially attractive, but down-trodden, environment. Two areas were chosen for development. One is the site for the sculpture which pupils will construct next term. It is on a main route between two blocks which during the winter is muddy and difficult to cross. The other is a square which for some time has been considered for much-needed seating.

It was this second area which the fourth formers decided to tackle and their first step was to find out how the other 1,000 or so pupils thought the area should be developed. They circulated a

questionnaire and received an overwhelming request for seating.

Their next task was to look at the way the area was already used, taking photographs, doing sketches and noting the routes which the pupils took when crossing the square. It was work which went beyond the ordinary art lesson and Harry Ridley remembers: "At all stages, experts were called in when the kids reached a point where they found they were stuck."

The Newcastle Architecture Workshop is a community-based organization funded by the Royal Institute of British Architects to educate people about their environment and help them work towards improving it.

Joan Kean, a town planner, qualified teacher and project manager of the Workshop, worked side by side with Harry Ridley right from the start of his environmental work in school. She explains: "It takes a great act of faith on the part of a teacher to move into an area in which he is no longer the expert. Harry would come to see me with ideas and I would look at them from a planning point of view. He would know the constraints within the school - such as the timetabling of children."

Even in the early days, there was also close contact with Gateshead planning department, while first year architecture students from Newcastle University were called in to draw up the initial plans.

In the end, these plans were rejected by the pupils, and Harry Ridley recalls: "Our kids just looked at them and decided they would try their own designs. From kids who had said they were no good at art, they had developed the confidence to criticize the models - even though they were those of university students - and to try and work on something of their own."

Four models were developed by the youngsters, who split into design teams of two or three. These models were then put to the whole of the school for a vote, and out of the two favourites, the final choice was made on cost considerations.

As it was, the winning design would have cost £3,000 to build if it hadn't been for the help of local firms and Gateshead council which provided free materials and labour.

Work began on the seating at the beginning of this term with the fourth-year group putting in around a 10-hour week alongside the council workers.

"It's the best thing I've ever done at school," one boy remarked. "If you put all that effort into something, it's a shame to ruin it."

In many ways, the project is the next step on from the Schools Council's Art and the Built Environment project. For the past two years, Harry Ridley and Joan Kean have been running ABE courses at the school, giving pupils a chance to look at their environment and consider how they might improve it. They were one of the 50 groups set up throughout the country to assess the ABE scheme.

Following the summer school which wound up the official scheme last year, Harry Ridley came away thinking: "This can't be the end... I realized that although a lot of kids had been asked to appraise their environment, they were doing nothing in particular about it."

As part of a five-day ABE study in a nearby market town, sixth-formers designed a sculpture. Normally such a piece of work would have gone no further than the drawing board, but for the interest of professional sculptor, Richard Harris, who was working on an environmental sculpture on the banks of the Tyne.

Backed by Gateshead under the "artist in residence" scheme, he came into the school to work alongside six lower sixth-formers to develop a sculpture for the other site, identified by the fourth-formers as in need of improvement.

It was a lengthy, and sometimes difficult task, fraught with the problems of sacrificing individual ideas for something which was acceptable to the group, and ultimately, the school. Again, the needs of the rest of the pupils and staff were considered and the use of the site studied and taken into account.

Interest was generated throughout the school and wherever possible other classes were brought in to help on the project. A third-year technical studies group made a mock-up for the sculpture and are now making the moulds for the final piece of work.

The sculpture, costing around £5,000 to build, was, like the fourth-form project, been sponsored by the council and local firms. For many schools, it would have been too daunting a scheme to even consider but at Blaydon, the ABE scheme has developed a readiness to accept outside expertise and advice.

Elleen Adams, co-director of the ABE Schools Council project, commented: "Blaydon shows that teachers can use the opportunities given to them and develop a project which is not just about the environment but also about the children. It is a real example of the way in which the research, design and work, right from the start,

For peace's sake

Mary Millington tells Susan Thomas why she gave up teaching to protest against the introduction of cruise missiles



Eighteen months ago Mary Millington, a Quaker, gave up teaching, security and home comforts to live at the Women's Peace Camp on Greenham Common.

Since then she has been arrested, sent to Holloway and verbally abused by the citizens of Newbury. Still she is serene, hopeful and resolute.

All sorts of factors, personal, political and religious, contributed to her decision to join the camp but, as often happens, it was a chance remark which prompted her final, drastic decision.

Depressed by the unremitting arms build-up, the difficulty of trying to create a teaching career in an atmosphere of cuts, and her daughter's recent decision to live with her divorced father, she attended the 1982 Peace Rally in London.

"That, too, seemed depressing. The previous year I had been on my first peace march and had felt inspired by the vast crowds. 1982 seemed to be only a rehearsal, with nothing new to say."

"Apart from Arthur Scargill - bless his little heart - he said, or anyway I thought he said, that we should take direct action. It seemed the right thing for me to do."

That summer she sorted out her affairs, signed up on the dole and moved to the Main Gate of Greenham Common Tactical Missiles Base. With conventional spells out to talk about the camp, to demonstrate abroad or to recruit her forces, she has been there ever since.

It is not a lovely place. Bitterly cold, miles from anywhere and dominated by the chain-link and barbed wire fence. There is no grass, just concrete and bare earth. The women, one or two with young children, live in small beehive-like shelters which they have made by winding plastic sheeting over a framework of sticks or branches.

It is all the authorities will allow. At Mary's invitation I joined the group by the time we sat on camp, dislodged furniture in the dining smoke and listened to a quartet of kettles. A small baby sat groomed itself at our feet and a very much-miffed baby laughed and played with a very golden christening. An extraordinary mixture of poverty and idyll.

Mary is 35. Tall, thin, with wispy blonde hair and skin so pale that her face looks mottled and pinched in the cold wind. She seems a very private person.

She trained as an infant/junior teacher, taught for two years in a Nottinghamshire pit village, and then she left and hated the teaching style, and she came to have a baby.

Then came the divorce and the struggle to bring

up a child single-handed. At first she did charring because it fitted in with nursery hours, then, thinking of teaching in middle and upper school, took an OU degree. While she waited for a permanent post to come up, she joined the supply pool. "I taught everything, TD even. Heads were desperate. So long as you keep the class quiet and employed, they don't care whether what you are doing is worthwhile or exciting."

She got TEFL and a City and Guilds qualification in teaching the handicapped and had a succession of temporary posts in special schools. "Some, especially hospital teaching, I really enjoyed. I was still applying for permanent jobs, 30 a week sometimes if I wasn't too tired. Slowly I realized that there was no possibility of making a career."

So, apart from the pay, the comfort of her flat and her status as a "respectable" citizen, there was nothing to hold her to the job.

"Now," she says, huffing reflectively into red, cupped hands, "I ought to talk about being a Quaker."

After a conventional, middle-class, lapsed C of E upbringing, she found nothing to hold onto after her divorce. "Then one day I went to a Quaker meeting. Immediately I was at home. Sitting still for an hour was very good for me. I had become very jittery. And I found the strength within myself to calm down and come to grips with things."

"Then I discovered the Quaker Peace Testimony - formulated by George Fox in the 1660s - by which Quakers repudiate all outward wars and strife and weapons. I came to terms with the fact that perhaps I was a pacifist."

Thus when the cruise controversy began she took part in the October Peace March and subsequently spent Christmas Day at the Greenham camp with a group of Quakers. Her first contact with the camp.

In the meantime she had joined a local CND group. That was another eye-opener. "It was the first time I had talked to the people on my council estate - they were really friendly and pleased to talk. I discovered that the vast majority of them were opposed to missiles, that many of them knew more about the issues than the experts, and

that they certainly knew more about them than I did!"

During this time, her husband had remarried and after four months of agonizing appraisals it was decided that her daughter should join him, leaving Mary alone. Her belief in teaching undermined, her role as breadwinner diminished and her commitment to peace growing stronger by the day, Mary was ready for Arthur Scargill's message.

"But it was terribly difficult at first - just before I came and the first two weeks here, I had changed my life drastically. In any case it's always hard being a new woman at the camp. Simply surviving is such a struggle that no one has much energy to spare for others."

It was her Quaker and CND friends who helped her through that time, she says. "That's one of the most encouraging things... the groups, peace people, trade unionists, who come and put up their banners by the fire and make speeches. And ordinary people... people who say they've voted Tory all their lives but have started to think about cruise and know it's wrong. That takes a lot of courage."

She dismisses her own courage. "I am afraid when I think that I shall be stopped before I achieve what I set out to do. Like most of the women I've learnt the technique of switching off when I'm arrested or manhandled. And I have never suffered brutality at the hands of the British police."

"The Italian police are very violent. When I

took part in a demonstration in Sicily two women, one Sicilian and one from Greenham, had their arms broken. Another woman and I were dragged along by our hair. When we got to the police station we made two balls of the hair that had fallen out and gave them to the policeman in front of his colleagues. He looked a bit ashamed."

Even good, with the support of the group, is not so bad, she says. "No, the worst part of the experience was not the arrests but the period last January and February when we were subject to constant police harassment. They were in among us day and night, making sure we didn't put up tents or light fires, cautioning and hassling all the time. For instance two children were asleep under an umbrella draped with polythene. A policeman kicked the shelter away and said horribly frightening things to them."

"That came as a great shock to me. I was brought up in a middle-class way to think that policemen are wonderful, but once you step over the line you are treated quite differently."

The early part of the year, the physical and

psychological low ebb, was almost the end of the camp. "We survived because we are very stubborn women," she says, suddenly wreathed in smiles, "and because people rallied to us, with truckloads of firewood, expensive survival bags and venloads of mail from all over the world. Greenham is better known and better reported abroad."

After that period, she says, the Government decided to ignore them. But a smear campaign continued in some sections of the press. Labelled "communist lesbians" the women were variously described as living in filth, neglecting their children, carrying endemic diseases and being pawns of the Kremlin.

It was very damaging and only recently has there been a change of attitude and a renewal of interest from the liberal press.

So what did Mary feel she had achieved through her period of privation? "By herself no one woman achieves anything. But the camp has really made the cruise issue public. It has scared the pants off Thatcher and Heseltine. They'll stop at nothing to whip up hatred for us. They just want us to go away - but we won't."

"We're getting the message through that a heck of a lot of people don't want cruise. It's not a political issue but part of gutting rid of nuclear weapons everywhere in the world. For most of us it's a repudiation of militarism in general."

"The future of the planet lies with women because we can start afresh in a different way, without hierarchies, leaders or rigid rules. Because of militarism, capitalist greed for wealth and communist greed for inhuman efficiency, the vested interest that both sides have in creating a fear of the other and the presumption that as human beings we have the right to plunder the planet, we have reached a state where we have to start afresh."

"We have all grown up in a male dominated society where women are only allowed in on male terms. Men must be made aware that we have the right to think again - that we have the right not to fit in."

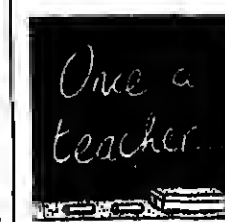
How does she feel now about teaching? I asked. "I'd never go back and after all this, and they'd never have me..."

"Being at Greenham has radicalized me. I'm not sure now that children should be all one age group shut up all day with one teacher. I think they should do much more problem-solving and think for themselves."

"Competitive games don't help either. From an early age children are taught to think in terms of one side or another. There are non-competitive new games of course, but you try telling that to the average secondary PE teacher. And the exam system too reduces cooperation. Most important of all, teachers should listen to children more. That's part of peace as well."

I left her, grave, strained, "probably" anxious about the way I would report the interview. As I passed out of earshot she said to one of her friends "I'm scared stiff about tomorrow."

The next day hundreds of women cut down more than a mile of fence at Greenham Common and 154 were arrested. Two women suffered broken wrists. Mary was not arrested that day.



The trials of Little Red Riding Hood

Nicholas Tucker looks at the ideological case against fairy tales



Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion. By Jack Zipes. Heinemann Educational £14.50. 0435 829831. 66.50. 82982.3. **The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood.** By Jack Zipes. Heinemann Educational £14.50. 0435 829874. 66.50. 82988.2.

Traditional fairy tales must by now have profited more publishers than any other form of children's literature, and as such are a major success story in themselves. It was not ever so; nineteenth century critics grumbled that they set a bad example, while others feared they helped sustain superstition - not always unreasonably, given that witchcraft accusations continued in some remote rural societies until very recently. But once Dickens and other big guns came to their defence, fairy tales had it all their own way, illustrated by the best children's artists, appearing in advertisements, games, films and television, and in 1981 publicly compared to a Royal Wedding by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There is a case to be made against certain fairy tales, however, and if anyone is ever going to make it stick it will probably be Jack Zipes, an energetic American academic and author of three

books on the subject: *Breaking the magic spell* (1979) plus the two under review here. Unfortunately, the force of his general argument is not matched by the clarity of his writing, which is marred by dubious global generalizations plus lengthy quotations from left-wing theorists, a few of which are repeated word for word in both these books without becoming any easier to digest the second time round. But for those who persevere the major work here, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, is still the most challenging study to appear on the subject for a considerable time.

Looking at Grimm's tales, Zipes argues that far from being collected from peasant story-tellers, the famous brothers looked mostly to the petit bourgeois or the educated middle classes, who had already injected their own form of respectability into these traditional stories. In addition, the Grimms also did their utmost, when transcribing the tales, to play up descriptions of good manners and feminine docility while easing out more vigorous forms of behaviour. The result was a collection rich in descriptions of assertive courageous princes, virtuous self-sacrificing mothers, timid maidens and industrious children, all united in their respect for the existing social hierarchy. Later on, some twentieth century German writers re-wrote these tales along different lines, but all such efforts were banned by the

Nazis, who left the tales to speak for themselves, although adding their own explication of them afterwards in order to bring out sound, fascist morals for the children to whom they were addressed.

For Zipes, the whole "bourgeoisification" of fairy tales, from Perrault through to Grimm and ending with Hans Andersen, is a betrayal of their original, less socially submissive spirit. As an example of this, he takes readers through no less than 31 different renderings of a particular favourite fairy story in *The trials and tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*. In a reconstruction of the earliest known oral version, which does not appear here, Red Riding Hood was a resourceful peasant girl who finally tricks the wolf; after she has got into bed with him, by insisting that before anything else she simply must relieve herself outside. Slipping away, she just escapes; in Perrault's subsequent literary version, however, she becomes both more modest and more accident-prone. It is only by the twentieth century, represented here by James Thurber, Angela Carter and Tom Ungerer, among others, that our heroine starts to assert herself again, often to the marked disadvantage of the wolf. I remember a post-war cartoon film, for example, where Red Riding Hood, now an ageing night club hostess, finishes in full pursuit of a wolf more

than anxious to make an excuse and leave. But what is the answer for parents or teachers keen to preserve the ever-fascinating detail of more traditional fairy tales for children, but disliking their frequently reactionary social message? Zipes himself urges the case for what he calls "reutilized" tales where writers alter the emphasis while keeping close to the original plot. But the examples he quotes from are largely uninspiring, more likely to appeal to fearfully responsible adults than to children still enchanted by hoary old seducers such as massive rewards, beautiful princesses and the whole idea of living happily every after. A better solution, perhaps, is to mix traditional tales with more inventive fantasy writing which uses fairy story machinery while also striking out on its own in other directions. Successful examples of this range from Oscar Wilde to Walter de la Mare and Catherine Storr; there are also various video games now where children can play through fairy tale plots altering the variables as they go along. In these conditions, the young can be extremely flexible, just as they are when asked to write their own up-dated versions of fairy tales as a classroom exercise. In this way, knowledge of the originals does not necessarily lead to the brain-washing effect Zipes anticipates, particularly when children always have alternative, contrasting examples to draw on as well.

Dr Davies, one feels, would certainly not presume, in the absence of all evidence about the matter, to pronounce on the bedroom aspect of Forster's middle-aged marriage to a wealthy publisher's widow but his book is, in any case, not intended to be a full-scale biography. It is a record of Forster's "literary life" with only a bare outline of his non-literary existence. The book is divided into four sections. The first studies the young Forster's development of friendships with certain well-established literary or theatrical figures (Leigh Hunt, Lamb, Bulwer Lytton, Macready); the second chronicles his indefatigable labours as "Literature's friend"; the third describes the literary aspects of his close friendships with Browning, Landor, Dickens and Carlyle; and the last dutifully surveys his work as journalist, as historian and as biographer.

The first three sections are packed with detailed information, much of it contained in hitherto unpublished material and we are made to realize, very vividly, just what an astonishingly crowded life Forster led, especially after joining the Lunacy Commission in 1855. Dr Davies's book, although it is not the full-scale biography of Forster that we need, is infinitely more useful and important, from the point of view of Victorian studies, than Mr Williams's *But Mr George Eliot*, however unfounded and preposterous many of its assertions may be, does at least bring its subject to life. From the Forster book we gain much knowledge about what one notable man of letters wrote and did while from Williams's, much more impressionistic, work we get a strong sense of extraordinary literary partnership. Both books, therefore, have much to offer the reader even though they do not strictly need negotiation at the beginning of this review.

Friends and biographers

Michael Slater reviews studies of two key figures in the Victorian literary landscape

phy, sources are seldom given for quotations and the index is wretchedly inadequate. F R Leavis, characterized as a "choosy picker of winners", is the only scholar or critic referred to throughout the book and the style is relentlessly boring and tedious - we hear about George Sand's "hip-roaring sexuality", for example, or about H G Wells's blueprint for getting mankind "safe aboard a swift inter-city train bound for the New Jerusalem".

A further contrast lies in the apparent attitudes of the two authors towards their subjects. Dr Davies's book seems not to have been written out of any strong attraction towards, or curiosity about, Forster as a person nor out of any desire to offer some new interpretation of the man and his place in literary history. Forster is presented very much as he has always been seen by scholars, as "Literature's friend", a man who devoted himself with outstanding energy to upholding the cause of "the dignity of literature" and to furthering the interests of individual writers and the literary profession in general.

Dr Davies has a great deal to say in detail to tell us about Forster's literary activities - the extent to which he was responsible, for example, for the

form in which "The Charge of the Light Brigade" was published - but, apart from the not very well supported assertion that Forster, influenced by Carlyle, eventually lost faith in the value of imaginative literature, not much new to offer in the way of overall assessment. Mr Williams, however, is crusading for greater recognition of the quality of Lewis's literary output (there is a good chapter on his *Life of Goethe*) and of his part in making vocal the genius of George Eliot. He wants to make us feel Lewis's fascination (the ugly little man could completely charm anyone he wished, it seems) but is also concerned to dissipate some of the reverential mists that surround the figure of George Eliot. We hear much of her "beady little eyes" and alleged liking for money ("most anxious to heap together as much of it as she could"). She also, Mr Williams roundly asserts, liked a lot of something else: "Sexually Lewes discovered... that this heavy-jowled, serious minded woman was a far more eager, far more deeply satisfying partner than ever Agnes [his wife] had been." Quite how Mr Williams comes to know so much about this side of Lewis's union with George Eliot is not divulged.

Speaking prophetically

Maydays. By David Edgar. BSC Barbican Theatre. **Pack Of Lies.** By Hugh Whitmore. Lyric Theatre. **Lovers Dancing.** By Charles Dyer. Albany Theatre. **Buried Treasure.** By Owen Wymark. Tricycle Theatre. **The Relapse; Or Virtue In Danger.** By Sir John Vanbrugh. Lyric, Hammersmith. **Hay Fever.** By Noel Coward. Queens Theatre.

Two cheers for the London stage: new plays outnumber revivals by four to two. Disillusionment is the theme. David Edgar's sprawling *Maydays* treats it on a world-scale tracing the disillusionment of the political Left through 35 years of recent history. Communism's New Jerusalem, confidently predicted on the hustings in the heady days of 1945, is revealed as a vision betrayed by power-politics against which today's Greenham Common women pit themselves vainly. It is a sorry story, overlong in telling (three and a half hours), but never less than interesting. More, it is theatre that matters: Edgar, in the best tradition of poets and dramatists, speaks prophetically.

The contrasting careers of Communist Party members in England and Russia faced with the cynical overthrow of Marxist libertarians in Hungary 1956, the eclipse of the Prague Spring 1968, martial law in Poland 1981, blend to make a parable warning against state authoritarianism and the loss of individual freedom. Jeremy Croxther (ex-army officer/university doc) and Martin Glass (party activist/journalist) move slowly from Left to Right, from one authority to another, always dissenting from the majority. Student riots, squats, women's rights, gay liberation all add to their sense of social disorder leading to the equation liberalisation=prostitution=nihilism. Too little freedom? No, too much.

While they suffer crises of conscience, Russian Pavel Lermontov suffers imprisonment for his dissent. Finally expelled from Russia, he is fêted by Crowther's Committee in Defence of Liberty for use as a propagandist tool against Moscow. Given a speech, he repudiates it - turning the rhetoric of authoritarianism against itself. This provides one of the best moments in Ron Daniels' smooth (and mammoth) production. Antony Sher gives Glass a fine non-conformist edginess; John Shrapnel skilfully delineates Crowther's decline; Bob Peek makes Lermontov a hero for our time.

Pack Of Lies, by Hugh Whitmore also deals with authority and individual freedom. Like *Maydays* it handles historical facts: the difference is that all its characters are real: it is a true story. The "Portland Spy Case" (1960-61) was solved by using a neighbour's house to spy on the Krogers. That the Krogers were their neighbours' best friends, valuing and loving them in return, turned "doing one's duty" into betrayal. Personal scruples counted for nothing when state security was invoked. Neighbour Barbara suffered most. Her shameful powerlessness to resist authority, disillusionment at broken ideals of friendship, led to her early death. That is Whitmore's interpretation of the events: a small domestic tragedy destroying a suburban family.

If that is pertinent enough, the acting makes it something universal. Judi Donch, Michael Williams, Eva Griffith create a family of such ordinariness that the idea of acting is forgotten. Barbara Leigh-Hunt brilliantly realizes Helen Kroger's warmth, need, compulsive lying; the slow death of Barbara's spirit is minutely particularized by Judi Donch's superbly truthful artistry. Clifford Williams' direction, Ralph Koltai's design, Robert Ormby's lighting and the entire cast make this a first-rate piece of theatre. *Lovers Dancing*, Charles Dyer's

new comedy, is impeccably acted, beautifully designed and lit, cleverly directed. The undoubted skills of Paul Eddington, Colin Blakely, Georgina Hale, Jane Carr keep our interest and make us laugh. What they cannot do is make us believe in these impossible couples and their extraordinary talk about disillusionment in marriage, lost youth, feminine wiles.

Owen Wymark's *Buried Treasure* is utterly unbelievable despite attractive performances by Prunella Scales and David Vep. Playwrights who get round soliloquies by having them addressed to the assembled house plants, who have characters introducing themselves complete with pocket-histories, deserve to fail.

Vanbrugh and Coward don't. William Gaskill's production of *The Relapse* seems designed to demonstrate Simon Callow's splendid wit with Foppington, whose idiosyncratic diction and studied assurance dubs him a bought-baron arriviste par excellence. Nobody else is given room to impress. The women lack vocal and dramatic skills - particularly Marsha Miller who made nonsense of Huyden (the black daughter of her quintessentially English father). The prapric sub-plots pall and whenever Foppington exits the play sinks under a weight of wordy boredom for which Gaskill must take the blame. Excepting Mark Payton, who acts Simon Bliss with a nice period sense, the faults of Kim Grant's production of *Hay Fever* spring largely from miscasting. Carl Toms setting belies the Blisses' bohemianism though his costumes are delightful. Fans of Penelope Keith will enjoy her being Penelope Keith; fans of Coward will miss authenticity. A fine flurry for "Love's Whirlwind" to end Act 2 showed what might have been.

John James

The script of *Maydays*, by David Edgar, is published by Methuen at £1.95.



Allen Steadman (Amanda) and Anthony Sher (Martin Glass) in a scene from "Maydays".

Prompt copies

The British Theatre Association welcomes callers at its headquarters at 9 Fitzroy Square, London. It is only surprising that it gets so few, for the BTA building in the heart of Fitzrovia, the rackety, slightly down-at-heel area which has always been the spiritual centre of literary London, also houses the British Theatre Play Library. To be more precise, the handsome BTA building in Fitzroy Square is the library's collection of 34,000 books, the most comprehensive library of English drama in the world, fills room after room with the manuscripts of playwrights, but unpublished pieces; the works of Alan Ayckbourn are shelved in a room of their own; equally prolific eighteenth-century predecessors Isaac Bicknell, Henry Fielding, some of the British Theatre Association's prize possessions, the cuttings-book of the Victorian critic William Archer (together

with some 1,500 volumes from his personal library), a handwritten note from Henrik Ibsen and the stage manager's prompt copy from a mid nineteenth-century production of *Hamlet*.

All these are available to the general public. Librarian Egid Foster appreciates an advance phone call and a couple of hours' warning, but is at home helping a teacher choose something different for a school production or finding material for pupils working on CSE projects as she is with the more abstruse enquiries of postgraduate students and professional theatre people.

Membership of the Association (currently £12.50 a year for individuals of schools, universities and other organizations) confers even more advantages. As well as its highly-regarded Information Service, the BTA also maintains a comprehensive collection of reading sets of plays (although for

reasons of space half of these have recently been lodged with Westfield College, University of London). Members may hire these for periods of three months - long enough for even a major school production to be rehearsed.

There are also substantial members' discounts on the range of courses in directing, acting, stage management and voice work run by the Association for actors, drama teachers and students. With tutors including Alan Ayckbourn, C. S. Berry, James Roose-Evans and John Russell-Taylor it is surprising to learn that there are often vacancies on all of them. But, like the library, maybe this aspect of the British Theatre Association's work is something which those of us in the know have kept far too quiet about for far too long.

Hugh David

Milk, wine, despair

Sleeping Policeman. By Howard Brenton and Tunde Ikoli. Foco Novo. Essex University Theatre, Colchester. **The Duchess of Malfi.** By John Webster. Oxford Playhouse Company. Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds.

Sleeping Policemen was arrived at by the two playwrights separately developing characters improvised during Foco Novo workshops. A pituitous technique is used to introduce the six characters. Flashes of monologue and slices of life - in isolation all but meaningless - coalesce in time and at a distance into a semi-naturalistic impression of life in Peckham.

The action centres on Dinah (Carrie Lee Baker), a young, newly elected Labour councillor living on milk, wine, self-importance and despair. Working long hours and getting nowhere, she is repeatedly brought up against the ineffectiveness, even ludicrousness, of her position, both personal and political. Where Dinah is wryly sent up, Paul (Craig Crossbie), an advertising man of the breed "trendy" used to apply to, drift from Stainesville, captioned by his microwave and compact disc, pushed by a burglary into overt racism and assault, is positively hounded by his own lines. (This is what happened to melodrama: hiss here.)

The working-class characters are treated more kindly. A friendship develops between the Irish woman and the West Indian bus driver. Elizabeth (Ella Wilder) attacks her dry rot, having learned how from the "Enquirer" discarded by Bert Bloggs (Alfred Fagon), a "wordsmith" and the kind of uncoordinated, muttering, borderline tramp we cross the street to avoid. "A book is a bomb," he tells her. Whereas Paul's cry of pain is "My

things! Mel", Elizabeth's is "Look at the way they want us in live!" Something about camels and needles' eyes comes to mind.

Clarity is the outstanding quality of Jane Howell's *Duchess of Malfi*. Relationships and situations can be easily, even instantly, read by an audience without any false simplification. An example from the very beginning: when Antonio (David Boames) is asked about the French court, he answers, "I admire it" and then goes on to say why, but Boames is able to show in those three words that admiration (inspired by the French king's pragmatic uprightness) is not the only thing he feels about it; that his attitude to court life in general is ambivalent, and how far he trusts his friend Delio. A similar history is carried by the opening exchange between Bosola ("I do hunt you still") and the Cardinal ("so"), 20-odd lines later. It's this care for detail from a notably strong cast that makes the production as a whole so stimulating and rewarding.

The oddness of the play is reflected in Stephanie Howard's false perspective set with upstage figures looming unnaturally large. With five central characters, the *Duchess* is a difficult balancing act and Jane Howell sets Bosola, rightly it seems to me, at its centre, acknowledging his kinship with Hamlet, Vendice, Hieronimo, et al and adopting the tangled motivational logic of the revenge play's awful schema.

Jim Burrows

Sleeping Policemen visits the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, November 7 to 26, Albany Empire November 29 to December 1 and Croydon Warehouse, December 2 to 3. *The Duchess of Malfi* is at Taunton until November 12.

Create your own Wild Thing! The call comes from The Bodley Head, publishers of Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* and George Rowney who are together sponsoring a competition to find the best painting, collage or model of a Wild Thing. Entry forms may be obtained from The Bodley Head, 9 Bow Street, Covent Garden.

London WC2E 7AL and the closing date for entries is December 1. The judges will be Maurice Sendak, K E Goatman of George Rowney, Judy Taylor of The Bodley Head and Oliver Kaussen the composer, whose opera based on *Where the Wild Things Are* opens at the National Theatre on January 9.

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ARTS

To make life (temporarily) bearable

Sheila MacLeod reviews Granada's 'Heroin' trilogy

Heroin. Produced by Steve Morrison. Directed by Peter Carr. Granada Television, November 7, 8, 9.

People take drugs in order to make life more bearable—or less unbearable. As Thomas S Szasz has shown in *Cerebral Chemistry*, we have been doing so since the beginnings of humanity. Most of us today use some sort of drug regularly, whether alcohol, tobacco or everyday painkillers. We are self-conscious and sensitive beings, and drug use can enhance life, temporarily obliterating awareness of its nastiness, brutishness and brevity.

Drug misuse or abuse is another matter. Far from enhancing life, it tends to destroy it and in the process deepens our desperation. But the line between use and abuse is a thin one which we should be well-advised to recognize as such. The novelist Anna Karenin was a heroin-user for over 36 years and died at the age of 68. A far cry from the unemployed youth of Edinburgh who peopled Granada's three-part series.

It seems to me that there are two basic questions to be asked in connection with the ever-increasing use of heroin among all classes of young people. The first is concerned with prevention: what leads some people to misuse drugs? The second is concerned with cure: what, if anything, can or

should be done to save them from themselves and in the process safeguard the community? The Granada films touched only indirectly on the first question, but explored the second in some depth and detail.

The housing estates of Pilton and Muirhouse on the outskirts of Edinburgh form a rundown area where unemployment is high and poverty endemic. Granada's research indicated that there were 400 heroin users on these estates, an estimated 1 in 12 people between the ages of 16 and 34. There is a high incidence of theft and fraud committed by users. In Edinburgh itself the addresses of no fewer than 90 dealers are known to the police. Shocking as these figures may be, neither the medical nor psychiatric professions, nor indeed the police, seemed willing to assume any responsibility, let alone take any action. There is little reason to suppose that Edinburgh is unique among large cities in any of these respects.

In Pilton and Muirhouse responsibility and action have been left to the community itself. Heather Black (a Caledonian-stern-and-wild-lair saint) and Morag MacLeen (an ex-addict) run Support, a help and advice on drug addiction (SHADA) from a prefab known locally as The Villa. This is a self-help and mutual support group for users and their parents, particularly their mothers. They have no financial support from outside sources and do

all their own fund-raising. Here users are encouraged to be honest with themselves and others, which is the beginning of wisdom, and of the outstanding characteristics of addiction being an almost incredible self-deceit. They are also helped with their legal and financial problems.

There was Gary, who said heroin was like an electric blanket. There was 16-year-old Pam, who said, "I'm losing everything. I'm not who I used to be." There was Harry who had started using heroin after watching his father die, addicted to painkillers. There was the young woman who had injected herself in her neck, groin, breasts and hand in the search for a usable vein, and who eventually had to have her hand amputated. "Numbly," she said bewilderedly, "ever asked me why." There was Morag herself, who, during the course of filming (and perhaps because of the concomitant stress?) became addicted again. And there was Morag's mother who had seen her daughter on the point of death through four withdrawals. Again and again came the declaration: "I've got to stop or I'm dead." Again and again they wouldn't, couldn't, at any rate didn't, stop.

Why not? There will always be some people who, for a variety of reasons, find life more difficult, demanding and destructive than others do. (You don't have to be poor and unemployed to fall into this category, but of course it helps.) In the absence of proper facilities for help and treatment, to stop using heroin amounts to a voluntary renunciation of euphoria, or, more prosaically, of the very thing which makes life livable.

Heroin is also big business, and unscrupulous people are getting rich on our children's vulnerability. Even at the rate of £50-£100 per day, heroin is cheaper than it was 20 years ago—Ajax, Sanilav or similar. Heavy users learn to maintain their habit by dealing or stealing or by prostitution. The absurd thing is (in my opinion rather than the film-makers') that the damaging effects on personal health and the surrounding community could be alleviated, if heroin use were decriminalized.

Not a likely circumstance in the present climate. Meanwhile users and their parents can't hang about waiting for that (or any other major social change which would make life more bearable) to happen. Devoid as they were of editorial comment, the Granada films intentionally offered no solutions, no sociological or psychological analysis. What they offered instead was something essentially exploratory and in the circumstances something much better: a compassionate understanding of heroin use at grassroots level. We were left free to draw our own conclusions and, if so moved, to act accordingly.

Cues for music

"As an artist, the musician's contribution to improving the quality of life comes from his or her work as a performer, conductor, teacher or producer." (Incorporated Society of Musicians' booklet *Trends in Music Education*, 1983.) At their recent conference the ISM expressed concern for those pupils of average musical ability who after leaving school take no further interest in music (or offer to regard music more positively? One way to bridge the gap might be to bring them into contact while still at school with professional musicians and composers so that the music they heard perform in class becomes more relevant in the wider context of music society: its performance live, or on radio or television, the role of the composer, etc. Two counties making progress towards this are Cumbria and Berkshire.

In the Cambridgeshire area (and also in London) guitarist Nigel Morgan has arranged a series of lectures and recitals in which twentieth-century electronic compositions (see Stockhausen's *Spiral*, and David Bedford's *18 bricks left on 21 April*—the latter specially commissioned for the film-makers of Saffron Walden County High) are discussed and performed by invitation. These educational visits serve not only to illuminate the music of influential contemporary composers for pupils studying their works at O and A level (particularly helpful in view of the difficulty of hearing him scores and the rarity of concert performances); they also provide stimulating discussion for all pupils taking general arts courses in the sixth form. Mr Morgan plans to include folk and non-western music in a further series of lectures/recitals next year. Further details from the Arts Council's Central Registry for Music Education.

Robert Lennon, coordinator for twentieth-century music studies at Berkshire, aims to cast the net even wider. He sees the electronic music studio not as a specialist activity for the chosen few but as a link between the creative work done in the classroom and the work of established composers such as Ligeti and Lutoslawski. The twentieth-century music ensemble (which though at present extra-curricular is an essential element of the county's music education policy) operates on two levels: performance and composition. Performers (currently about 30, drawn admittedly from the county's better musicians in the 16-plus age group) have recently tackled Ligeti's Chamber Concerto and Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* with members of the London Sinfonietta; the composition group learns the concepts and techniques of electronic music through creating and assessing their own collage pieces and comparing them with those of established composers working in the same idiom. Future projects include a study of the work of Pierre Boulez where pupils will have an opportunity to meet the composer and discuss his compositional techniques. It is not only the gulf between music in school and the community which is narrowed by such experiments. Microcomputers (in constant use in the Berkshire project) will be seen to be of value not merely as office equipment but as musical instruments in their own right, where no one feels obliged to justify their use by making them sound like a harpsichord or other conventional instrument.

Philippa Davidson

Next week
Robert Fox on the popular vogue for medieval history and the simultaneous decline in its academic study; Robin Buss on television and radio programmes; primary books

about territory, the territory this time being a graffiti-strewn playground behind a block of flats where "Kev is King". The central character, Frankie, meets Maria, a newcomer who has recently fled from Brazil after the shooting of her father, Frankie and Maria get on well together, but Kev, a hating foreigner, demands absolute loyalty to him.

There is neither violence nor bad language in *Frankie's Friend*, yet the intensity of the acting and Frankie's final brutal punishment make it a shattering and provocative experience for its intended audience of 9 to 13-year-olds.

Most importantly, neither play is an end in itself, a self-contained "treat for the kids". They both raise important issues and leave them open for teachers to follow up in the classroom.

Nick Baker



Diane-Louise Jordan as the pilot in "Puzzles"

Imaginary countries

Puzzles and Frankie's Friend. Theatre Centre, touring outside London.

Theatre Centre's two new plays for schools are simply very, very good. *Puzzles*, by David Holman, is for five to eight-year-olds and is about two imaginary countries, Green and Yellow, one rich and fertile, one barren through lack of water. When a pilot from Green lands in the desert of Yellow, the children witness a gradual change in attitude from confrontation to cooperation. Cleverly staged and sensitively performed, the play uses language minimally and the children are gradually invited in the roles of interpreters and eventually conciliators, bridging the gap between the two countries.

Adults should be shown *Frankie's Friend* to remind them of the toughness it sometimes takes to survive as a child. It too starts with an argument

War and peace

This year we made two Senior Information Book Awards, for Defence, by Charles Freeman, published by Batsford at £6.50 and for Just Imagine: Ideas in Painting, by Robert Cumming, published by Kestrel at £5.95. David Self reports

Whatever else may be the merits of the joint prize-winners of the senior section, these two books certainly inspired the panel of judges.

At an early meeting we found the selection of a short list a painful and comparatively speedy task, notable mainly for our unanimous expressions of odium or approval. At the final session, and despite the excellent qualities of many of the runners-up, it soon became apparent that this was ultimately a two-horse race with a photo finish. A lengthy disputation followed in which we sang the very different praises of each book and finally strank from consigning either to second place.

Defence, by Charles Freeman, is like one of those editions of *Panorama* that you feel has been voted for balance at every level of the BBC from director-general upwards. Even so, you know it will be attacked for being too dove-like and too hawkish; for failing to emphasize the moral and economic lunacy of the nuclear deterrent and also for not stressing the need to invest in Cruise missiles.

Mr Freeman begins by sketching the depressing history of war in the twentieth century, explores the morality of the so-called "just" war and the problems of assessing a threat to national security. In particular, he examines possible Soviet aggression and concludes that there is little immediate danger of Russia adopting an expansionist policy but every risk of the super-powers' mutual destruction. He then turns to the chapters he concentrates on the British defence programme, presenting a masterly summary of both sides of the nuclear debate as it affects this country. Finally, he expresses his own opinion that the unilateral disarmament is "a brave and positive attempt to end the risks of nuclear war". It is difficult to see how unilateral disarmament would necessarily make Britain a safer place to be.

Although the author's prose is a model of clarity and even though he signposts each stage of his argument with great clarity, this is not easy reading and we hesitated long about awarding the prize to a book suited only to the older and most able reader. However all credit is due to the publisher and author for tackling the subject and writing it so well.

Just Imagine, by Robert Cumming, could hardly be more different. Basically a "let's look at painting" book, with the emphasis on content rather than technique, it encourages us to look at some 50 paintings ranging from those of Fra Angelico and Titian to Mondrian and Jackson Pollock, to seek out recurring images and symbols and to discuss their significance. The text is a mixture of questions and answers which provoke check observation and overcome many of the barriers that hinder appreciation of classical, modern and modern art.

The author's tone is a little like that of an enthusiastic and imaginative guide to an art gallery. You may find it all a bit too much, or you may be captivated and spend far longer looking than even you meant. It is certainly very easy to use and the illustrations which are all in full colour and reproduced to a very high standard. *Just Imagine* is a beautiful, sumptuous book with lots of colour and a very high standard. Mr Cumming sets up so admirable exercise in the way of painting to have it solved immediately by a detailed painting alongside the painting in question. Quibbles apart, it is a significant contribution to art education.



Welcome idiosyncrasies

Geoff Fox on some trends and oddities

It is easy enough to spot where young readers are likely to learn little from information books. It cannot be very extending, for example, to come across a picture of a squashed bird with the caption, "Birds, like this muggle, are often killed by cars. Do you think we are doing enough to protect our wildlife?" (*Conservation*). And the judges were unanimous in hoping that no child resident within a quarter of a mile of their own homes stumbled upon page 18 of *What Can I Do Outdoors?* with its enthusiastic instructions for a chucka or two of Bicycle Polo: "You can only hit the ball with your mallet and with both feet on the pedals. . . . You cannot block a player or use physical contact to force a player away from the ball." (Oh yeah?) At least the authors had sufficient recollection of live children to concede, "You can add to or alter the rules".

The trick seems to be for authors of information books to ask, like teachers planning lessons, "Just how do I leave space for the reader to get inside this information, to take possession of what I want to put on offer?" One of our winners, *Just Imagine*, provides an outstanding example of a text which consciously leaves entrances for the reader to think around inside the ideas. Too many of the entries were as impenetrable as fortresses.

To engage a reader, you have to find the right voice. Some adopt a breezy, Boy's Own Paper style: "Here are some versions of complex joints which will amuse old craftsmen and confuse your friends." (*Adventures with Woodwork*). Alternatively, there is the mildly looney approach: "Creeping up on Cats. Practise your stalking skills by seeing how close you can get without being spotted. . . . Get to know the cats in your area. . . . Try following a tom on his daily patrol" (*The Young Naturalist*).

In fact, the judges rather welcomed a conspiratorial tone of this kind, since too many of the books carry objectivity to the point of bland tedium. Most of us learn readily from another's

idiosyncrasies—or at least uniqueness. It seems helpful, then, if a distinctive voice comes through the pages; though some governing bodies might feel the author of *Freedom from Work* was pushing things too far: "One British minister recently implied that the unemployed should 'get on their bikes' to look for work, the result of which would be to put up the price of second-hand bikes—and that alone." Barrie Sberman's royalties may have to be sent to The Tower.

Happily, the information book's slavery (to the "double-page spread" (a traditional target for the Award panel) seems to be nearing abolition. The main drawback of the complete-in-itself spread is that it leads to the arbitrary selection of material loosely grouped around a topic; once again, bow the reader can engage with the theme of the book is ignored. Albums of double-page spreads belong wherever adolescents put books which they might leave on coffee tables. One deficiency of the format does survive, however; the tendency to crowd a page with so many multi-coloured photographs, charts, artists' impressions, chunks of text and diagrams that there is no way in which the material can be approached, let alone assimilated. Such books can make you go blind.

Some broad trends in content were discernible. We lost count of the books we read on computers. Second opinions were solicited from the consumers here; in the main, they dismissed the books as child's play to serious operators, certainly those of secondary age. We suspect that while wall-meaning, or merely ignorant, parents might buy these books for their children, the real learning can only happen "hands-on" at the keyface.

Too many of the books about computers and technology in general blithely pretend that the world will surge forward in an unproblematic way into the universe of Dan Dare. Although the illustrations to *Computers in Everyday Life* looked as if they'd been drawn by an Internal

continued on page 24

How to do it

Patrick Eavis on the senior runners-up

This year's top themes among the runners up were health, history, art and the countryside. There were several health books in the competition, and the best of these *You and Your Body* (by David Keable-Elliott, Hamish Hamilton £5.95) is a guide to health, and an aid to the understanding of bodily functions and changes. Written with lucid precision by a medical practitioner who understands the concerns of adolescents, it covered a much wider range than other books in the field, for example, family relationships, mental illness and those aspects of health service organization relevant to young people. The language is simple without being patronising and the diagrams are admirably clear. On sex it is refreshingly direct and free from the "counselling" coyness that usually accompanies these discussions. It would be difficult to recommend a better information book on health for a child's reference.

On a more specific health issue *Addiction in the News* (by Vanora Leigh, Wayland £4.50) probably began as a collection of source material for health education courses, and very good it would be for that. But it stands on its own as an excellent book for teenagers. A broad range of addiction is covered; alcohol, drugs, smoking, as well as gambling, obesity and anorexia, with caffeine thrown in to worry us all. Mercifully it is free from a strong and heavy moral tone but it is provocative and very well researched with telling, if disturbing, statistics. Addiction of all kinds is certainly in the news and this book must be a helpful contribution to any discussion of the problem.

Meet Matisse (by Nelly Munthe, Walker Books £5.95) lifts us to a different plane of imagination and creativity. And very refreshing it is. In his later life Matisse, unable to paint, worked with scissors and coloured paper to make magical images of natural things. The book encourages the child reader to do the same. The instructions are simple and clear and the book cleverly uses a study of Matisse's later work to extend the vision and stimulate the imagination to a deeper appreciation of colour and shape. Occasionally the book shows the dangers of ignoring Wittgenstein's famous advice on keeping silent about things you cannot express but the book aims to do something which is very difficult and on the whole succeeds.

Meeting the Romans in their environment as revealed by archaeological research is Mike Corbridge's aim in *The Romans* (Hamish Hamilton £3.95) and a first-rate job he and his illustrators make of it, with abundant archaeological material and good use of Roman literary sources, art and mosaics. Altogether this book vindicates those who emphasize the importance of the imaginative use of evidence and sources in history teaching. The book is exciting, lively and accessible, with excellent, accurately researched illustrations that have at last got away from the creaky stiff pictures that still adorn most history and classics books.

From the same publishing house comes *Dailines of History* (by Guy Arnold, £5.95) which aims to present a chronological survey of "the whole range of human achievements and activities—from Stone Age to Space Age". Of course that's impossible and is bound to lead to superficial summaries and scarcely supportable generalizations. However, it is a very useful reference of important events and comparative developments across continents and cultures. We all found it immediately interesting, a book that you can easily dip into. But after reflection, we suspected that it would be more interesting to fairly knowledgeable adults wishing to impose some order on their muddled historical memories than to curious teenagers.

The judges did not put the runners up in any order but I found the most interesting *The Field Guide: A Farmland Companion* (by John Woodward and Peter Luff, Blandford £7.95). It is a guide to most things you would find in British farmland: crops, animals, birds, flowers (but no trees), fungi and moorland. The book is full of accurate information about farming from someone who really knows. Perhaps it is a little too pro-farmer and a little too quiet on controversial ecological questions but with good colour pictures for identification of species, and interesting historical background on farming techniques, it is an excellent guide and just the right size for your anorak pocket.

continued from page 23

Trends and oddities

machine itself, the authors did raise ethical matters, such as the probability that computers will divide rich and poor countries even more widely. We would have welcomed more questioning of this kind.

We were also disappointed to note that in *Television and Video* the Jones family are discovered in their future home with supermarket manager Dad checking stock on his closed-circuit television, his children studying in their own rooms at their screens, Grandma checking a dahlia catalogue on his video disc, while crippled Granny watches "the goings-on out in the street" through the local cctv. Meanwhile, coffee cup at her elbow, poor Mum is locked into "her favourite day-time programme", the 24-hour European news station. With everyone viewing away in their separate boxes, you wonder what there is in the street to watch or how the news station fills up its 24-hour slot and there does seem at least ground for complaint from the Ageist and Sexist lobbies.

Studies are also in. There is a concern for health (*Beautiful Bodies*, *The Structure of Your Body and Body Maintenance*) and with more cosmetic interests in view, *Maggie Philbin's Good-Looking Book*. Sport, however, has had a lean year - there were no entries in the field at all. Perhaps publishers have decided that enthusiasts read books which are not specially written for a young readership.

Our general welcome to idiosyncrasy of style did not extend to one or two intriguing oddities. There was disconcerting news for mariners in *Lighthouses*, since the Eddystone Lighthouse crops up just south of Dover on the end-paper map. The *Collins Guide to Dinosaurs* should describe well all the number of young dinosaur watchers, but just what information are Collins privy to that they can describe the book as a Field Guide? *Three Day Evening* invited its readers to a voyeuristic peep's tour of Badminton, down to photographs of full litter bins, boy-scouts (with half-full litter sacks), a clutch of snags of the royals and Leslie Vachell, the Duke's butler. We felt too that it was snatching at straws for the compilers of *The Timeable of Technology* to claim as a "fringe benefit" in their chart for 1946 that "the bikini swimsuit is modelled four days after the bomb test on Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean".

Lastly, two books to look out for. *Trace Your Family Tree* is an unassuming and very useful paperback for teachers doing projects based on families, such as ILEA's *Myself* booklet. Teachers of history and social studies ought to look at *China*. For *A Change*. The stance is partial to a degree, in that it is very pro-Mao and very anti-Chiang. Perhaps the authors - both teachers, and lively with it - cop out in that they finish the story pre-Tibet in 1949. Teachers may hate its comic-book style, its shouting black and red pages - I thought they'd make fascinating overheads for a class to talk about. You cannot ignore, however, what the authors are trying to do - to make complex modern history accessible to a wide range of abilities.

Conservation. By John Bentley and Bill Chaiton. Batsford Educational £4.95. 0 7134 4287 5. *What Can I Do Outdoors?* By Ollian Oshand, illustrated by Bobbie Spargo. Hodder & Stoughton £3.50. 0 340 32996 3.

Adventures with Woodwork. By Richard Stewart. John Murray £2.95. 0 7195 3991 9.

The Young Naturalist. By Andrew Mitchell, illustrated by Sue Jacquemier and Martin Bramwell. Usborne £1.85. 0 85020 653 X.

Freedom from Work. By Barrie Sherman. Wayland £4.95. 0 85078 287 2.

Computers in Everyday Life. By Ian Litterick and Chris Smithers. Wayland £4.75. 0 85078 258 9.

Television and Video. By Helen Minter. Kingfisher £3.95. 0 86272 067 2.

Beautiful Bodies. By Dan Freeman. Walker Books £4.95. 0 7445 0003 6.

The Structure of Your Body. By Dorothy Baldwin and Claire Lister. Wayland £3.95. 0 85078 305 4.

Body Maintenance. By Brian R. Ward. Watts £3.99. 0 85166 978 6.

Maggie Philbin's Good-Looking Book. By Maggie Philbin. Piccolo £1.75. 0 330 26931 3.

Collins Guide to Dinosaurs. By David Lambert. Collins £6.95. 0 00 195387 7.

Three Day Evening. By Genevieve Murphy. Andre Deutsch £4.95. 0 233 975381.

The Timeable of Technology. Edited by Patrick Harpur. Joseph £12.95. 0 7181 2171 6.

Trace Your Family Tree. By Margaret Crush £1.25. Granada. 0 843 30580 6.

China. For *A Change*. By P. Neighan and J. McWilliams. Harrap £2.95. 0 245 53987 5.

Myths dispelled

The Junior Award was won by *Mum - I feel Funny!*, by Ann McPherson and Aidan Macfarlane, with drawings by Nicholas Garland, published by Chatto and Windus at £3.50. Gerald Haigh reports on it and the runners-up

As always, we were looking for something with a bit of soul, a hint of personality, a whiff of enthusiasm. Sheets of paper with facts on them are all very well and have their place, but a real live book, seething with entrancing energy, will go out and grab its readers, converting the sceptic and convincing the uncommitted.

Each of the six on our "short list" (strictly unofficial, for this Award, unlike others of which you may have heard, has no short list) has something a little special about it. Thus Rollo Browne's *Aboriginal Family* (A and C Black £2.95) looks at first like an ordinary project book, one of hundreds. A closer look, though, reveals that it presents a more than usually unromantic, realistic and well-presented account of life among today's black Australians.

Camilla Jessel's *Learn to Bird* (Methuen £3.95) is in the same way a conventionally presented collection of texts and photographs which by doing its job with care succeeds in putting across a great deal of information, using as its didactic vehicle the unsentimentally told tale of a hand-reared fledgling thrush.

The voice of the text in Richard Mabey's *Oak and Company* (Kestrel £4.50) sings with a rather more raucous vibrancy, in tune with its ecologically sexy subject matter. "The Oak's first two leaves unfolded on their matchstick-sized stem on an Easter Sunday at the very beginning of the eighteenth century." The message is that the tree is part of a great symbiotic system. The illustrations are beautiful and lush - so much so that you have to look hard at times to pick up points referred to in the text.

Lavishness also characterizes Camilla Jessel's *The Joy of Birk* (Methuen £5.95). Although well-furnished with the kind of photographs I have to view from behind the settee, the emphasis here is on the loving and emotional aspects of the arrival of life into the world - the whole epitomized perhaps by a large and beautiful photograph of a Sikh father holding his new baby. *Bird*, watched by Gareth Thomas (Piccolo £1.50) is, quite simply, the bird watcher's pocket bible. In this book perhaps more than any of the others the enthusiasm of the author comes shining through - he strides towards you with outstretched hand like a vicar at a jumble sale. His book indeed is crammed with facts and projects and experiments, presented in a crowded format which has its own aesthetic like that of a cluttered junkshop. I learned more about birds in half an hour with this book than I ever could from just looking at the little blighters.

In the end, though, we chose as the winner, *Mum - I feel Funny!* by Ann McPherson and Aidan Macfarlane. This book sets out to explain a number of the common illnesses and other medical misfortunes which beset every family. It does this by means of cartoon strip stories professionally and very amusingly drawn by Nicholas Garland. It is my experience as a teacher that family illness is, in many households, as much



surrounded by myth and deliberate fudging as sex and childbirth. Consequently, children will leap to this book as a way to the truth. They will not be disappointed, for it tells with candour of diarrhoea ("I think Ben's got it now too. Look! He stinks!"), threadworms ("Mum, I can't get to sleep - my bum itches like mad"), and head lice ("Is that one?" as well as other maladies such as chicken pox and flu).

The voice is unpatronizing, the subjects are well chosen, stereotyping is avoided and - as important point this - the book can stand on its own for the reader without the need of guidance or interpretation from teacher or parent. It seems probable that everyone in the information book business would like to find an obvious and useful subject and proceed to do it simply, professionally and well. Here is a good example of how that aim can be achieved.

Zoo of the new

Marion Glastonbury on junior trends

"Your clear eye is the one absolutely beautiful thing."

I want to fill it with colour and ducks. The zoo of the new whose mimes you meditate...

Sylvia Plath was not alone in believing that dawning perceptions deserve radiant images, and this year, the best visual samples of what the world has to offer generally come from photographs. "Can you read all the words?" asked the three-year-old to whom I presented *The Early Words Picture Book* by Bill Ollham (Methuen £2.95). The name of the single object depicted on each left-hand page is actively incorporated into descriptions of family fun on the right, as the rabbit is fed, the bicycle ridden and bubbles blown.

The combination of glowing photographs and simple captions proves equally attractive in Jano Miller's *Farm Counting Book* (Dent £3.95), and Mary Hoffman's lucid commentary on wild-life close-ups (*Elephant, Tiger, Panda, Monkey, Windward/Beithin*) gives excellent value at 99p apiece. (How much extra would it have cost to number the pages?) Adjudicators have previously complained that scant attention is paid to urban fauna which would be accessible to the overage child. *Town Birds* by Alan Richards (A and C Black £3.50) encourages observation on rubbish tips and building sites, and explains why feral pigeons often look so seedy. (Is it unwarrantably pedantic, I wonder, to wino at the substitution of "less" for "fewer" in "Less trees and bushes grow in towns"?)

Two welcome additions to the Bears series - *Sakina in India* by Tony Tigwell and *A Village in Egypt* by Olivia Bennett (A and C Black £2.95 each) illustrate slices of a 10-year-old's life in communities where, respectively, silver thread for sari borders is spun on a bicycle wheel, and water for crops is drawn from the Nile with an Archimedes screw.

Imported Chinese food, calligraphy and paper-cuts are celebrated in *A Day with Ling* by Ming Tsow (Hamish Hamilton £3.50), and the glimpse of a policeman gulping curry at the St Paul's Festival (in *Carnival* by Ian Menter, from the same publishers £3.50) will probably do more for the image of the Force than several solemn promotional texts in which officers look as grey as their flimsy cabloths.

But some unexpected revelation, or special stroke of originality was required to render familiar themes impressive. The presentation of the spadefoot toad and the ssin bowbird succeeded in the cases of *Deserts and Jungles* by Clive Catephole (Walker Books £4.50). Beverly and Jenny Halstead reanimate a hoary topic in *A Brontosaurus: a life-story unearthed* (Collins £3.95) by isolating archaeological evidence and letting us in on scientific debate: How do we know brontosaurus could swim? We deduce it from fossil tracks showing only front footprints with an occasional back print where they put a leg down to change direction. Well I never.

In books, information is conveyed staccato or legato: we get discrete items or a continuous flow of data delivered at speed for rapid reference, or an experience unfolded gently for gradual assimilation. Either way the author's interest must be sustained throughout. Too often the end is approached with palpable impatience and attained with sighs of relief. Even the admirable Geoffrey Patterson on runs two sentences together in his haste to finish *Dairy Farming* (Deutsch £4.95) while Ralph Whitlock, an award-winner in 1975, leaves us, as it were, in mid-air, with a half-plucked turkey carcass on the last page of *Poultry* (Wayland £3.50). Animal biographies may have to kill off their heroes and heroines eventually but in Geoffrey Tarrant's farewell to *Butterflies* (Natural Pop-ups, Heinemann Quince Press £2.95), the death of the individual is hearteningly off set by the triumph of the species - all 20,000 varieties of them.

QUERTYUOP was devised for typewriter keys.

We are Equal Opportunity prize-givers, so it was clear from the start that some books disqualified themselves by their attitudes to race and sex. Possibly the worst offender on both measures is the series of "I am... Books", with two titles competing this year: *I am a Nurse* (obviously, female) and *I am a Vet* (naturally, male). In fact both books would be more spily titled "I am a Midget" because the hero and heroine are cute little children thinly disguised (starched apron, flat cap) as the adults whose roles they play for a day. The books are lavishly illustrated with full-colour photographs of a fully white society, and connoisseurs of small print will note that the nurse's dream takes place in a private hospital. As if this weren't enough of a flight from reality, the big event in the nurse's day is the rescue of an old buller in plus-fours who has fallen off his push-bike ("What a horrid fall!"), while the midget has a more scientific approach to the non-events in his surgery. ("Now I am studying germs under the microscope"). The books have, it seems, been produced by a committee of four, though the author bashfully disclaims any credit for having produced a text: the by-line on the front end-paper simply refers to "Words: Val Williams". A few marks for honesty I suppose.

These two aren't the only books without a proper author: *On the Moon* has a consultant instead. This book is a good example of another disqualifying principle, apparently held by many. This is the idea that in information books for children, information must be handled in a childish way, and the less you tell them the better. There's another way to account for the unwillingness of some authors to part with any worthwhile information at all. To fill up the spaces left by cutting out all the interesting bits, many authors resort to questioning their captive audience. The very first sentence of *On the Moon* is "Have you ever wondered what it's like on the moon?" and the last "What do you think the space station will look like?" I'm just thankful information books for adults aren't written this way. "What do you think are the central themes of post-Keynesian monetarism?" In fact, *On the Moon* is a particularly feeble effort, because the few facts that link the questions together are pathetically low-level, and it seems to me, completely out of touch with what young children already know: "These three Americans are called astronauts."

The fillings of the moon book are even more dazzlingly obvious in the extraordinary *Discovering Together* series by Charles Betty, M Phil. The level of information on offer is even more puerile: "In winter the sun seems to be less warm than in the summer" (*Weather*); "When kittens grow up they become cats" (*Pets*); "A shop which sells fish is called a fishmonger" (*At the Shop*). And the unwillingness to part with any nuggets of slightly more complex knowledge is even more pronounced; instead the readers are bombarded with questions, or sent off to enquire of others: "Why do you think a mouse may not like a cat?" (*Pets*). "Ask your teacher to tell you who Prince Albert was married to" (*Christmas*).

Believe it or not, there's a teacher's handbook for this series, explaining the need for "good children's reference books", and invoking Bullock, Joan Tough, and our old friend, Language Across the Curriculum, to show what "powerful learning tools" these books are. You see, each book has been designed to cover as many areas of the curriculum as possible, and there are flow diagrams to prove it: want to do simple science during your Christmas topic? Simple! Reindeers! History and geography from the study of *Pets*? Easy! St Francis of Assisi!

Which brings me to another role for information books: watch out for those with too many exclamation marks. They are the expression of the author's embarrassment at being caught writing this drivel. Take *France is My Country* for example, an otherwise unexceptionable little sally into multi-ethnic territory by Bernice and Cliff Moon (though I was saddened by the cryptic note on the title page: "This book is based on an original text and photographs by James Tomlins"). Better luck next time, Mr T. Photographs of French women, men and children are accompanied by a few sentences, written in the first person, describing their jobs and life styles. But the exclamation marks keep breaking in: "Yes, I am a dentist!" (Robert). "That's how skilled I

Am almost as thick as autumn leaves they come, the books about adolescents and their anguishes. Darkest and most powerful is Nigel Williams' *Johnny Jarvis* (Puffin Plus £1.50), which is less about the eponymous hero than about the narrator, the bitterest of basterd since Don John; with unemployment, crime, the black economy, racism and the joys of love, it holds almost more than a modern novel can accommodate but the fierce, funny language carries it off.

Johnny and Alan might wish they had the problems of Barbara Werber's heroine (Tuesdays for a Small Hermionica, Bodley Head £3.95), living in almost disgusting affluence in New York, though her problems of identity - she is dressing like a boy but has checked that she isn't a lesbian, and is a freak - are real enough. Somewhere between the social extremes there books present is Rebecca, who would be an ordinary enough girl if she could forgive her father for the drunken solidarity of his mourning for her mother (Your Friend, Rebecca, Linda Hoy Sparrow £1.25); this is a sensitive and spirited book, but shows signs of careless revision - shortening, perhaps - and the quietism of the end may seem a let-down.

The problems of being different are explored in *A Proper Little Noorrey* (Dean Lee, Puffin Plus £1.10), when a child discovers to his horror that he is a talent for ballet dancing; rather in tone than the others, this will have value points to make about the necessity for deciding who one is and standing by it. It takes him courage, but more is needed to stand for herself by Lisa, who perhaps dies with the link in the *Highly*, ecological science fiction *King-Rise Ring-Set* (Magpie £2.25); Monica Hughes does not think from the complexities of a simulation, she has extrapolated from our own problems.

It is a sort of good science fiction about a present, quite apart from the questions of classic short stories like *Conversations* (edited by Malcolm Edwards, Puffin Plus £1.25). Wargames (David Blatoff, Puffin Plus £1.50) the book of the highly successful film, is an obvious example of the endless attraction of the Frankenstein fear in the age of the computer; but Nicholas Plisk's *Robot Revolt* (Puffin £1.00), with the robots enlisted to break a paternalistic tyranny and then seeking their own power, is a more subtle variant.

The problems of being different

Audrey Laski rounds up the latest children's paperbacks

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Where science fiction shades over into fantasy, John Christopher has always been a favourite. *Red in Fireball* (Puffin £1.25) he uses the notion of the alternative universe to insert his English and American heroes into an England still ruled by Ancient Romans, where after exciting adventures they have to recognize that the overthrow of one tyranny is too often the establishment of another. Victor Kelleher, an Australian writer, three of whose stories are simultaneously published by Puffin, simply invents the kind of society he needs for his tales of simple heroism; in *Earthside in Paths of Thul*, (illustrated by Anthony Maitland, £1.25) it is a village on the edge of a magic of a treasure nobody in the village believes in; as always in Kelleher's books, it rests on one boy to dare everything that is necessary to defeat the conquerors.

Fantasy rooted in everyday life is another matter, and a late book by Dorothy Edwards, *The Witches and the Grumpyog* (Magnet £1.25) is a very different matter indeed. Anyone looking for the simplicities of *My Naughty Little Sister* or the naturalism of *A Little Sister* or the naturalism of *A Little Sister* and *Willow Girl* will be bewildered by this brilliant defence of the Old Religion, with its precise articulation and its upturning of all our ideas about witchcraft; a very remarkable book. It has a flavour all its own, and so does *The Hollow Land*, Jane Gardam's prize-winning set of stories ab-

out the Cumbrian fells (Puffin £1.10); the reader here needs to be alert and to like hints and half-tones; adults will enjoy it as much as the right children.

The falls are haunted by stories, and some of them belong in Kevin Crossley-Holland's *Faber Book of Northern Folk-Tales* (illustrated by Alan Howard, £2.95); this, with its companion *The Faber Book of Northern Legends*, provides a distinguished introduction to the rather grim heroic of Northern story-telling. Faber are doing an excellent job of building a library of such material; *The Faber Book of Northern American Legends* (edited by Virginia Haviland, illustrated by Anna Strindberg, £2.95), encompassing Amerindian, black and immigrant tales, is equally satisfying. But however well come retelling of old stories may be, it is an occasion for real celebration when a new collection of fairytales appears which has the ring of rightness about it, and at least some of the stories in Terry Jones's *Fairy Tales* (Puffin £3.95) have exactly the right shape, and tone; "The Glass Cupboard" is the most beautifully structured ecological parable I have yet seen, in a market increasingly choked with ecological parables. Michael Foreman's illustrations, many of them full-page and in colour, increase the pleasure.

The only better-looking book this season is *Aladdin*, with Errol Le Cain's illustrations to Andrew Lang's telling of the familiar story (Picture Puffin £1.50); the other picture books are fun rather than magic; *The Hobnabs* (Simon Stern, Magnet £1.50) has the right atmosphere for its subject. *The Tiger Who Lost His Stripes* (Anthony Paul and Michael Foreman, Sparrow £1.60) is a cheerful fable with some very neat touches, and the tiny Henry's cat books (*The Whale*, *The Holey*, etc., Bob Oodfrey and Stan Hayward, Hodder and Stoughton 50p) are a good size, shape, style and price for beginners.

Of course, *The Highwayman* (Oxford £2.50) is a different kind of picture book altogether; Alfred Noyes' poem is illustrated not just hauntingly, but devastatingly, by Charles Keeling; Francis Bacon could hardly have intensified the visual howl of english that accompanies "Shouting a curse at the sky". Strong stuff, books of verse for children seem somewhat frail beside it, though there are pleasures to be found in all of these: *Ducks and Dragons* (edited by Gene Kemp, illustrated by Carolyn Amon, Puffin £1.00). *The Sausage* is a Cunning Bird (edited by Jennifer and Graeme Curry, illustrated by Penny Simon, Knight £1.25) and *Invitation to a Mouse* (Eleanor Farjeon, illustrated by Anthony Maitland, £1.25).

Easy, lively reading for 10-year-olds is not easily come by, and teachers will welcome *Macmillan's Rockets*, of which Catherine Storr's bright, bright February Fowler (illustrated by Gareth Floyd 75p) is a good example. Edward Arnold have a series from the Antipodes, which, similarly, though with less distinction, give children accessible adventures that might be their own; *The Billy-Cart Battle*, in which the good guys beat the rich guys most satisfyingly (Hezel Edwards, illustrated by Magpie £1.25) is a fair representative.

Finally, there are some books where it should be enough to mention that they are available. One such is the new *Mary Heron*, *The Barnyard Animals* (illustrated by Pauline Baynes, Puffin £1.50); another is the best of all modern fairy tales, James Thurber's *The Thirteen Clocks*, re-issued once more with Ronald Searle's spiky illus-

seven, wants to learn about computers, so his friend Pete the programmer takes him in hand. First stop is TAK the terminal. "To his astonishment, Sam noticed that it had two little feet dangling over the edge of the desk, two hands folded neatly under the screen and a pair of eyes tightly closed. A snore bubbled softly from a small mouth." As primary teachers are learning every day, the children are more capable and more confident than they are of coming to grips with today's technology: giving the hardware hands and feet seems a gratuitous insult to children's intelligence.

But if you carelessly leave *Sam's System* lying about within reach of young children it at least won't do them any harm: we were not so certain about *The Foot Soldier*, from Oxford University Press. Technically it is a historical review of 13 fictionalized soldiers, from an Athenian hoplite (418 ac) to Corporal Joe Borelli, sweating it out in Germany 1944. The final chapter brings us up to date with the Third World soldiers of the 1970s (easily recognizable by their leopard skin trousers) and the Warsaw Pact infantryman of the 1980s.

The illustrations are explicit and many of them frightening, but it is the text that is truly alarming. The only critique that is offered of war and its horrors is based on judgments of efficiency, accuracy and power. The political judgments are shockingly naive - if it is naivety that inspires them and not some more fashionable Victorian ethic. This is a dangerous book; the only good thing about it is that it's the best argument yet for compulsory Peace Studies Across the Curriculum.

Discovering Together: Weather, Christmas, At the Shops, Puffin £1.45 each, Teachers Handbook 50p, by Charles Betty. Holt Rinehart and Winston. *Sam's System A Guide to Computers*, by Rosemary Court. Dent £3.95. *On the Waterway*, by Malcolm Dixon. Wayland (Young Engineer Series £3.50 each). *The Chappell Piano Book*, by David Gregory. Hamish Hamilton £4.25. *On the Moon*, by Angela Grunsell (Consultant). Franklin Watts First Library £1.99. *France is My Country*, by Bernice and Cliff Moon. Wayland £4.50. *Maps and Map-making*, by Mark C. W. Sleep. Wayland (Young Explorer Series £2.50 each). *I am a Vet, I am a Nurse*. Dent £3.50 each. *The Foot Soldier*, by Martin Windrow and Richard Hook. OUP £4.95.

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Body in question

Tell Me About: My Body and How It Works. By G. Finlifer. Collins £3.95. 0 00 19583 4. The Young Scientist Book of the Human Body. By S. McCreith, A. Goldman and T. Lister. Usborne £1.99. 0 86020 747 1. You and Your Body series. By D. Baldwin and C. Lister: The Structure of Your Body 0 85078 305 4. Your Body Fuel 332 f. Your Heart and Lungs 303 f. How You Grow and Change 333 f. Your Brain and Nervous System 331 f. Your Senses 304 f. Wayland £3.95 each. Your Body: 1. Skin and Bone. 0 370 30601 9. 2. Blood and Lungs. 30527 2. By Gwynne Veevers. Bodley Head £3.75 each. Body Maintenance. By B. R. Ward. Franklin Watts £4.25. 0 85166 978 6.

Many of us find difficulty in answering the direct questions posed by young children. When the required response is especially personal, or delicate, one often feels that a particular sort of approach is necessary. Situations of this sort have served to inspire Germaine Finlifer to compile a set of posed questions, with answers. Items like "How does father pass his sperm in mother?" and "What are faeces?" as well as 77 others, are arranged in the two chapters of this work. Throughout the book, amusing, instructive, coloured drawings are arranged in boxes on the pages opposite those containing the questions and answers.

But, despite explanations which are mostly very adequate, this book will

not tell embarrassed parents and teachers off the hook completely. There is no glossary (not necessarily a disadvantage here), so some of the terminology will require interpretation and a few of the answers will need further explanation. The contents are ideal fodder for group discussion.

Usborne's highly popular books for children must be known to just about every parent in the land. Suitable for those of middle school age, their Young Scientist collection aims to convey, with the aid of attractive illustrations and diagrams, a practical understanding of subjects which impinge on everyday life, like electricity, spaceflight, jet aircraft, and now the human body. This cheap manual subtitled "How it works and how to look after it" provides simple, but comprehensive, coverage of vital functions, including those concerned with sex and birth.

The importance of exercise, even robotics, is emphasized and there is an elementary treatment of the main categories of diseases, immunology and a few other medical topics. The remaining books are all members of various human biology series. In the case of the You and Your Body set, the entire range of subjects is indicated by the individual titles. The language used is simple and printed in large type which has difficult words, also included in a glossary, in bold. Boldwin and Lister have a practical, common sense, approach, spiced with good advice. For instance, those who really care will be glad to see the items on the need for dietary fibre, food hygiene and the importance of personal health, being offered to readers at such an

elementary level. Their illustrations are attractive, functional coloured photographs and diagrams. Moreover, these books encourage youngsters to make observations on their own bodies, thus establishing the necessary tradition of practical work in science early in a child's education.

Gwynne Veevers' Your Body series will contain six volumes when complete. Its aim, to present factual, up to date information in an entertaining way, has been achieved in the first two. *Skin and Bone* and *Blood and Lungs* offer a fairly serious scientific text, which employs amusing water-colour illustrations by Sarah Pooley. Written coverage of the subject matter is simple but accurate and adequate, and for the most part the pictures are light-hearted and well integrated.

Body Maintenance does not refer to motor cars! It is one of a series of 10 intended to provide an explanation of the main functions and parts of the human body. Each number in the series concentrates on a particular aspect, in this case, body maintenance refers to homeostasis. Considering that this can be a somewhat difficult idea to get across at almost any age, Brian Ward has done a good job. After a brief explanation of the general concept, quite a lot of space is given to various aspects of the endocrine system, as well as water and salt regulation, but information on excretion, urine production, immunity, biorhythms, sleep and tissue renewal is also included.

Peter J Baron

Slimy stuff

What happens when you breathe? 0241 10271 X. What happens when you eat? 0241 10969 f. What happens when you grow? 0 241 10970 1. What happens when you hurt yourself? 0241 10968 X. By Joy Richardson. Hamish Hamilton £2.95 each. Hearing 0 241 10938 f. Seelag 0 241 10939 f. Tasting and Smelling 0 241 10941 f. Touching 0 241 10940 X. By Nigel Snell. Hamish Hamilton £2.95 each.

Parents and teachers will know that most small children have a great curiosity about how their bodies work. There are many books which try to cater for this interest, but they are frequently written in the form of "junior biology" - a simplified anatomy and physiology lesson. Joy Richardson's books approach the subjects from the angle which most appeals to children, that of practical experiment as an aid to understanding. In *What happens when you eat* they can discover the different taste zones on their tongues, squeeze air through a partially inflated balloon to represent the movement of food down into the stomach, measure out six metres of string for the length of the intestines, and then try to compress it into the size of the abdomen. These experiments and many more accompany a text which manages to convey a lot of accurate information in very simple language. Children will revel in the description of how food is broken down. "Saliva comes out from under your tongue. It makes the food soft and wet". In the stomach it is "sofi like

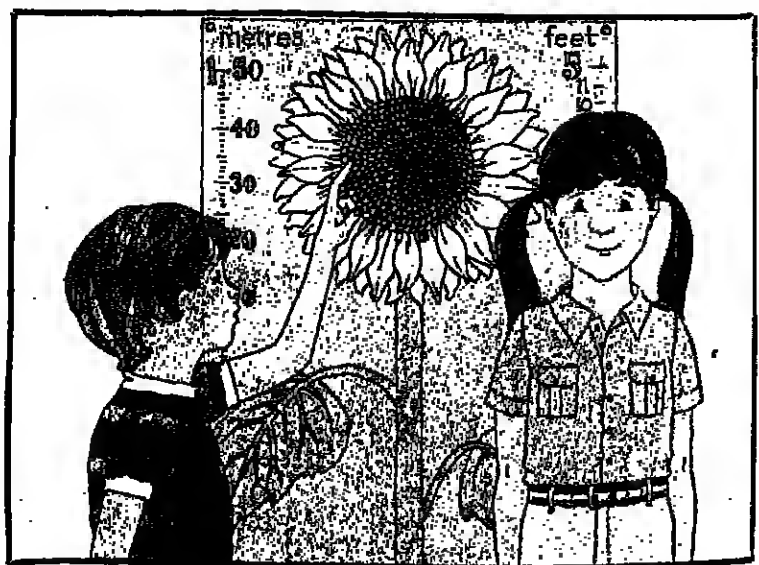
porridge" and in the intestines "the food is very watery now... the goodness in the watery food is sucked up and mixes with your blood". The illustrations are bold, bright and well matched to the text, showing both the digestive organs and processes and also children carrying out the suggested experiments.

The books on breathing and growing provide a similar wealth of accurate information. Special child appeal is shown in the descriptions of "the slimy stuff called mucus" in your nostrils, and the experiment where you shake your head over dark paper to collect dandruff.

What happens when you hurt yourself covers cuts and grazes, bruises, blisters and broken bones. It describes how the body heals itself, and also refers to medical help which may be needed for more severe injuries, for example, stitches or a plaster-cast. Children are reassured when they learn that their bodies can mend themselves, so reading the appropriate chapter with an injured child will do more than just distract from the pain.

Nigel Snell's series on the five senses has bright illustrations which children find amusing. Aimed at much younger children it provides only basic information about the working of the body. The nervous system is illustrated by little men carrying messages to and from the brain. It conveys the impression that life is fun because of our senses, but would be boring and dangerous without them. A six year old reader soon discovered that "the back page is best because there's a joke on it".

Cathy Duffy



From *What Happens When You Grow*

Baby news

Our new baby. By Grethe Fagerstrom and Gunilla Hansson. Macdonald Educational £4.95. 0 356 02620 0.

Before you were born. By Margaret Sheffield and Sheila Bewley. Jonathan Cape £4.50. 0 224 02085 4. £1.95 0 2964 9.

It took me many years of guesswork, hints, surreptitious conversations and sneaked glances at books to get some idea of the basic facts of reproduction and childbirth, so I've welcomed the wave of books giving information about these things to today's parents. The scope of the subject is so large, however, that it is not surprising that many books fail - or more often do not attempt - to tackle every aspect of this most emotional of subjects.

Books which try to explain everything about childbirth to children need to be accurate, with good illustrations, but to be more than merely clinical. They need to be attractive and able to be shared with others. They should tackle fears and difficulties honestly, and with a reassurance which will encourage children to come back and read again.

Our new baby - "a picture story for parents and children" - successfully does all these things. Peter and Lucy are going to have a new brother or sister, and their parents explain the whole process to them with an evocative Scandinavian thoroughness and lack of embarrassment which could become intolerable if we didn't also see them

belag bad tempered, miserable and occasionally thoughtless - just like us. It's a good story about the changes pregnancy and new babies bring to families, told from the children's point of view throughout. The book looks beyond the family; it touches on consumer pressures on parents, for example, and introduces us to neighbours with different types of families and extended families, single parents and adopters. It's all told with humour and flair, and is a good description of how families are happy, despite the tribulations.

Like a government health warning, the foreword tells us that it is important that the book is read with an adult in whom the child has complete confidence. This is much more than an endorsement; it's the best therapeutic advice for children. It offers us, by its images of sharing new lives, a model of behaviour towards children. It also shows children that being a parent is hard work. It's the only book I may have fought over. Every time it was left down, someone took it away, and one child solved the problem by setting up to read it in the middle of the night.

Before you were born tries to convey the sense of wonder and mystery of life before birth by simple words and tranquil pictures. There's a magical dreamlike quality to the pictures, which I found a bit disturbing at first. This book takes time to make its impact, and should be left for a while to discover and explore, rather than simply read with an adult.

John Duffy

Far off days



Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, appears in the "New Horizons AD 1453-AD 1650" section of *Datelines of World History* (Kingsley £5.95) by Guy Arnold. There are thousands of significant dates as well as articles on chosen topics, all attractively presented, chiefly from a European point of view, but with more than a glance elsewhere.

potamia, India and America) is a superb picture reference book. Its text is clear, concentrated and purposeful. Anything up to a hundred detailed and documented drawings fill each colour-coded page. If you would know precisely how things were, this is your book. Us! It for story-writing, projects, modelling or picture-making, drama or simulation; it is packed with information and ideas. Everything is clear and soundly-based; no blurred artists' impressions or discreetly placed smokecreens.

Prehistoric Man turns out to be deceptive and disappointing. Bernard Long's large, Ladybird-style paintings

are, you soon realize, very carefully based on good evidence, even if *Ramphiscus* resembles Fido begging, and the capering cave-artists come fresh from the local disco. But Rupert Oliver's worthy text runs into one disaster after another, from "the first link in the long chain of human evolution lived 60 million years ago in North America. Today scientists call it the *Plesiadapids* giddy!" to "about five thousand years ago, in the Babylonian city of Sumar, workers at the temple invented writing". Plodding prose and barren jargon spoil an otherwise useful survey.

Tom Corfe

Collar and tie history

History in Focus Series: Merchants and Traders. By Frances Wilkins 0 7134 1311 5. Music and Musicians. By Eva Bailey 0 7134 1310 7. People at Work 1930-1980s. By Cherry Gilchrist 0 7134 1366 2. Growing up in the 1950s. By C. A. R. Hills 0 7134 1367 0. Growing up in the 1960s. By Richard Tones 0 7134 1342 5. Batford £5.50 each.

The advantage of the topic approach in history is variety; and History in Focus embraces such disparate topics as horses at work, local records and even metrology. But the overabundance of the wide range is a lack of cohesion. In the absence of a dedicated rationale behind the series or any obvious links between topics, one is driven to the conclusion that what Batford's writers happen to have noted readily at their finger tips, they have put into the book. Briefly to the earliest known traders, the Sumerians and Phoenicians, and then focuses on the British experience in the context of Europe and then

of the world. The seamy side of international relations could perhaps be more emphasized for what it was and is, as well as their economic success - the total sacrifice of principle to profit, for instance, in the slave trade on which so many fortunes were founded, and the well-established and continuing exploitation of indigenous workers in areas of the East and the South for the greater common of Europe and America. But as a straightforward, clean-lined account in the Liberal free-market tradition this works well.

Music and Musicians is a respectable collar and tie wearing account, too. It's not that it concentrates entirely on art music; shantymen and folk singers, broadside balladeers and music hall artists all appear here too. But it seems a pity that what surely a majority of its readers will understand by the word "music" is hardly there, at all. pop seems to end with the Beatles, and today's vital Caribbean influences are virtually ignored.

These two additions to the Growing Up series - which does have an obvious rationale - have an authentic ring to someone who did grow up in these years. What seemed in the fifties to be

an essential second-rate drabness is captured well, particularly in the black and white photographs. The fifties were a monotone decade. Nothing was like it had been pre-war; anything with any life in it came from America, and was too fervently either despised or admired for it. Then suddenly it turned out we'd never had it so good and there was the country set swinging with hardly a push. *Growing up in the 60s* conveys the social progress of the decade without dwelling much on the permissive revolution. Ignoring the extent to which girls and women were able to get a now and longed-for control over their lives because of the contraceptive pill does seem to be an important omission.

All these books are well illustrated, by contemporary prints and paintings as well as photographs. It's apparently too much to ask that artists should always be named where known, and illustrations dated, however approximately, but it's good to see even the occasional attribution to "a Victorian artist's view" and reference to "a painter dated 1459". More of the same would be welcome.

Jessica Saraga

New dimension

The Human Body. By J. Miller and D. Potholm. Macdonald £7.95. 0 224 02086 2.

The only real introduction to this spectacular publication is a hard sell paragraph printed on the back. This invites you to "Discover for yourself what happens inside your body. By operating the tactile models employed in this unique book you can make a heart beat... and so on. Certainly the book is startling: a skinless model of a body, and if you open and close the two pages slightly, the jaw drops up and down, the tongue rises and the eyelids travel backwards in a simulation of swallowing. Other double spreads contain an eye with an iris in the retina, a working ear, a

video tapes which store visual information, along with more conventional descriptions, explanations, and comparisons.

This is no attractive book with a reasonable price tag, but how viable is it in formal education? How quickly will your kids, even if they are meek and mild, tear or wear the delicate hinged parts of the pop-ups? Do children really know enough about the workings of television cameras and computers for such machines to serve as primary concepts of functions in the body? As a one-off, to introduce some variety, I think it really would be a worthy purchase. Class sets? Well, that's different.

Peter J Baron

Routes to map making

AA Junior Atlas of Britain. Edited by Julia Brittain and Christine Sandeman. AA Publications Division with Hamish Hamilton £4.95. 241 11041 6.

A children's atlas is not new but a specialist route planner atlas for children is. It will satisfy the young, enquiring, restless mind on journeys and should also prove useful in schools.

This 96-page book explains, in simple terms, how a map is made; the scale of a map; using map grids; the story of roads; motorways; A and B roads; vehicle marks; traffic police; emergency; distance and conversions; how to plan your route and map symbols. There are 30 pages of road maps of England, Wales and Scotland on a scale of 8 miles to 1 inch. An index with six town plans fills the remaining pages.

Route-planning exercises are included, as well as several "activities", such as Silhouettes, an idea for learning about grid references. The publicist claims that the games can be played "again and again and help the miles to pass", but I fear they will be done very quickly, once.

The maps are easy to use with primary routes clearly marked, colour-coded roads, symbols to show "outstanding places to visit" and counties designated in different colours so that children can look for boundaries. The Scilly Isles, Ireland and the Channel Islands are omitted. The Farne Islands are in the index but not on the map. Some place names are spelled wrongly, for example Shackerstone in Leicestershire. The logic of showing unclassified roads is not clear as some are included and many others left out but on what grounds is not stated. For

instance, the minor road from Tilton to Oakham, Leicestershire, is partly drawn in but then is discontinued after a few miles.

Better indication of relief on the maps would have helped though the editors may have decided that this would be over complications. It would have helped to have distances given between points along roads as in most road atlases since children could more easily calculate distance travelled, etc. rather than using a strip of paper as suggested on page 13.

The AA commissioned market research among children, parents and teachers to find out the needs for this kind of atlas. This is very commendable, but they should have asked geographers and atlas consultants what was needed too. This would have produced changes in the format of the maps to cater for spatial abilities and deficiencies in the readers. For example, it would be better to include pictures or photographs with the route maps; these could have been arranged in strip form; chosen routes might have been selected for different parts of the country; maps could have avoided the double page with the inevitable split in the middle by being landscape style; a more rational selection of symbols and relief designation could have been made. Research shows this to be a most productive area for improvement in all atlases.

This atlas does not live up to its exaggerated publicity but it is useful. A great chance has been missed, however, to make a revolutionary children's atlas which really meets the needs. In this instance the AA have been too prone to adhere to their normal, conventional map collection.

Bryan Waites

Save the past for the future

Discovering the National Trust. By John M. Parry. Macmillan £5.95. 0 333 35346 3.

"A passport to treasure" is the slogan on the cover of this book. Interestingly written and well illustrated, it aims to introduce children to the work of the National Trust and the National Trust for Scotland. After explaining that their task is to conserve "for ever" places of historic interest or natural beauty, it describes particular examples such as windmills, hiding-places, bird sanctuaries, ancient castles or Cornish steam engines.

There are three main sections: where people lived, places where they worked and the outdoors, with useful

lists of examples grouped by regions. In many cases the author, who is a teacher, has introduced a child into the text to attract the interest of young readers. These range from a 9-year-old mill worker who did a 13-hour day, six days a week, to a 12-year-old whose father died leaving him an income of £200,000 a year, and the title Lord Egmont.

The section on elementary schools of 100 years ago, aptly titled "Sit Still", will particularly interest children, as would a visit to the Trust's schoolrooms listed - at Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire; Cragside, Northumberland; Shugborough, Staffordshire; and the Angus Folk Museum, Tayside.

Gillian Thomas

Discovering The National Trusts John M. Parry

"skilful story telling about exciting discoveries, secret hiding places, fanatical collectors and imaginative feats of engineering, that will spur the reader on to explore for himself..."

Elaine Moss, *The Good Book Guide*

Profusely illustrated in colour and black and white

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

£5.95 128 pages

Information information

Ways of Knowing. By Peggy Heeks. Signal Bookguide £2.25. 0903355 11 6.

Many teachers and librarians who are confident of their knowledge of children's fiction, will before the publication of information books which are published each year and are at a loss to know how they can tackle selection in a logical way. In *Ways of Knowing* Peggy Heeks sensibly decides to limit the scope of her bibliography to a formerly neglected but now fast-growing area of publishing: information books for seven to nine-year-olds. Mrs Heeks states her aims clearly and concisely in her introduction. These are to provide a basic book selection tool and a basis for workshop discussions, to help extend topic work and to assess the current state of information book publishing, which she achieves very well.

The intention, as in all good information books, is not to confuse the reader with an overabundance of facts, but to invite and encourage them to reflect and adapt the ideas to their own needs and experiences. The criteria for selection emerge not only in a useful summary at the end, but are always implicit in the annotations themselves and the division of the list into subject groupings lends itself to useful comparative evaluations. An overview of the range and quality of books in each subject area is given and although only a hundred or so titles are covered, they show the variety of approaches which

can be made to any one topic. The major points of criticism which emerge are those which have given rise to concern for some years now, including the overabundance of subject matter which relates hardly at all to the child's own experience, and the use of language and vocabulary, and the need for the individual enthusiast to write for children and convey their love of the subject in hand.

All in all, this is a sensible and down to earth guide to a complex subject, which should stimulate interest and discussion amongst teachers and librarians alike. Let's hope some of the publishers take a look at it too.

Vivien Griffiths

RESOURCES

notes

MICRO-MYSTERY

Computers are even affecting drama productions now. With a grant of £6,000 from the Department of Industry, the Snap Theatre Company of Bishop's Stortford in Hertfordshire are touring primary schools with *Micro-Mystery*, a play about Nori and her microfilm (computer), who go on a mysterious journey to find the computer's voice.

The play is followed up by workshops in the classroom. The children learn about the role of computers in industry, medicine and the home, and have to suggest ways in which they would use a computer.

Four actors and a computer with voice synthesizer (provided by Acorn and Sinclair Electronics respectively) are taking the play round 70 schools in Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and North London. After a short break performances resume on December 5.

Tony Armatron, £25 from Tandy stores. Micrograsp, £145 kit; computer interface board £48.50; Genesis P101, £954 kit; £1,650 ready built system. All available from Powertran Cybernetics, Portway Industrial Estate, Andover, Hants (tel 0264 64455). Armadroid, £250 kit from Coloe Robotics Ltd, 1 Station Road, Twickenham, Middlesex (tel 01-892 8197).

Automatic machinery has been a feature of the industrial scene for many years, but the development of industrial robotics had to await the advent of small, cheap and powerful microprocessor controllers. Robot arms rather than specialist machines, are used because of their flexibility and ease of programming. The general shape suits the normal working environment and will adapt to a wide range of tasks; programming is usually carried out simply by a skilled human operator guiding the hand.

Large quantities of numeric data are acquired and stored in the memory of the microprocessor controller and the movements acquire a subtlety which conventional methods of programming are hard pressed to reproduce.

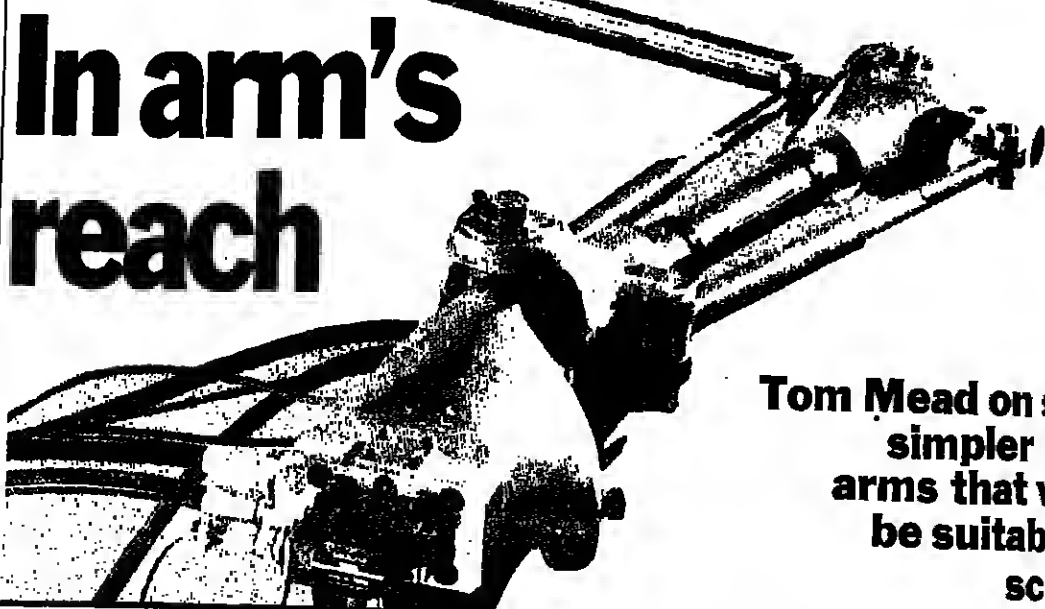
The obvious questions raised for educators are: should a study of robotics and its implications form part of the curriculum and is it worthwhile for schools to utilize scarce financial resources to the purchase of a robot arm? The former is not generally disputed but it is tempting to believe that a videotape of a robot is as useful as the real thing. Most technology courses emphasize the creative nature of the design process, but the education of an engineer must also encompass the study of existing devices and methods, and to accomplish this schools require access to at least some real machines.

The design of educational equipment is a specialized field; the devices must not only operate but also reveal the method of control and actuation. The "Gee Whizz" type of black box device which does something extremely clever but cannot be opened up, examined and modified is of little use to the teacher of technology. Extra instrumentation, practical manuals and study guides are essential. By these standards no commercial device passes the test of wide educational utility at the school level.

The following are some available units: the Tony Armatron (sold by Tandy), at about £25, is a remarkable piece of mechanical engineering; a six axis mechanical arm driven from a single electric motor. It is controlled by two joysticks, each affecting two axes orthogonally and a third by twisting the top. The main motions are dual speed so that at least 32 different actions can be accomplished by each stick, all through an amazingly complex but compact series of gears.

The Armatron is an extremely valuable instrument to demonstrate the

In arm's reach



Tom Mead on some simpler robot arms that would be suitable for schools

range of motions which need to be controlled, and pupils find it fascinating. It is hoped to produce a similar arm which uses electrical rather than mechanical control and therefore might be interfaced to computers.

The Micrograsp, from Powertran Cybernetics, costs £145 in kit form with a computer interface board available at £48.50 for machines like the ZX81 and Spectrum which have direct access to the computer bus line. However, the electronics have to be modified if it is to be used with BBC or RML machines and no details are given of this. The arm is driven by servo motors which turn both the limbs and variable resistors, producing a voltage output which indicates the position reached.

Circuitry on the interface board continuously compares the actual voltage with the value set by the computer and switches the drive motor off when they become equal. This is a powerful method of control as the main computer does not have to waste time on the detail of monitoring; and any number of motors can operate simultaneously. But it is not possible to read back the voltage to check that the required position has been reached.

The arm itself is of light construction with motors mounted directly at the joints, necessitating very heavy counterweights and it is alarming to see the variable resistors used as structural elements. Overall this is a difficult construction with scanty documentation and little provided in the way of control programs.

The Armadroid, produced by Coloe Robotics at £250 in kit form is a six axis arm worked by stepper motors through an ingenious series of strings

and pulleys. The whole thing is both clever and compact. The drive mechanisms are arranged so that all of the motors can be mounted at the base of the arm and movement of any one limb does not affect the orientation of the others.

Stepper motors differ from ordinary motors in that the movement is not continuous but rather, as the name implies, in a series of discrete steps, 45 or 96 per revolution. A datum is established by means of small magnets and reed switches and a count is kept of the number of steps which have to be applied to each motor to attain each required position.

Unfortunately there is no way of determining if some obstruction has caused a motor to miss some steps and this, coupled with the play on the string drives, makes the arm less precise than it might be. The interface is of a general type capable of being used with most computers and Coloe can provide high quality software for most popular computers which allows the arm to learn movements by steering from the keyboard and then playback on demand. An exciting development is the recent introduction of a low resolution solid state TV camera system, Colvis, which can be mounted on the arm and provide computer input of a view of the field of operation.

The Genesis P101 from Powertran Cybernetics costs £954 for a kit and £1,650 for a ready built complete system, both including a dedicated microprocessor controller. The arm is hydraulically powered and capable of lifting loads of at least 1.8 kg and is solidly constructed from high quality parts. The position of each joint is monitored by a contactless transducer

and can be read back at any time by the controller. The simplest mode of operation is to use only the internal microprocessor and a hand controller; a sequence of movements can be taught and replayed, continuously. Eight separate programs can be stored in battery backed-up memory. A computer interface is also provided which allows an external machine to control the arm. The master computer can read positions and order movements with the detail being left to the slave machine - the arm is sufficiently substantial for extra sensors to be mounted and used for more sophisticated control.

The price differential makes the purchase of a kit very attractive, but construction, particularly of the electronics, requires experience and skill.

There is room in the market place for a teaching unit on robotics and control in general, and there is certainly a need for the expansion of real engineering in school education even, dare one say it, of an increased academic approach to the subject. The current boom in the use of microprocessors in education has so far concentrated on software, an emphasis which belies the fact that in the real world this majority of microprocessors are performing control functions.

The nature of educational progress implies that curriculum development makes little headway without external pump-priming finance for both equipment and training and this is particularly important in the field of technology. The development of both awareness and specialist courses in microelectronics and control technology should be a priority.

MEDIA

The most significant initiative in modern language teaching in the last five years has been the spread of graded objectives schemes. Over 80 groups of teachers are working on local schemes trying to meet the needs of pupils who are not expected to reach CSE or GCE standard. All the schemes obey the new watchword of communicative competence and classify language by what pupils need to do with their skills rather than by their ability to analyse structures.

A major stumbling block in terms of classroom realities, however, has been the lack of suitable teaching and learning materials geared to the new definitions of language. It has been one thing to develop the theoretical syllabuses, but getting pupils actually involved in performing the various language tasks has proved more daunting.

In the past it has been possible to adapt existing broadcast series but this was a laborious task. This year BBC has launched a major new initiative designed explicitly to support Graded Objectives schemes. Two series have been produced to date: *Parle* and *Graded Objectives: Grammar*.

Both select survival situations which are commonly found in most new syllabuses - finding your way, travelling around by bus and train, talking about where you live. In each case a number of core dialogues are spoken by various voices. They are clearly recorded and sound effects help to locate them in different situations.

Emphasis is on gist comprehension and the important skill of learning to discard unnecessary material. The responses required from the pupils are carefully restricted; the principal use is likely to be with Level 2 classes.

A further point in common is that both series are meant to be recorded and used by the teacher on the classroom tape recorder. Neither can be listened to right through without using the pause and re-wind controls.

VIDEO

Search for Britale's Gold
Six films x 20 minutes.
Price: £60
Produced by the Occidental Consortium, available from Guild Learning, Guild House, Peterborough PE2 9PZ.

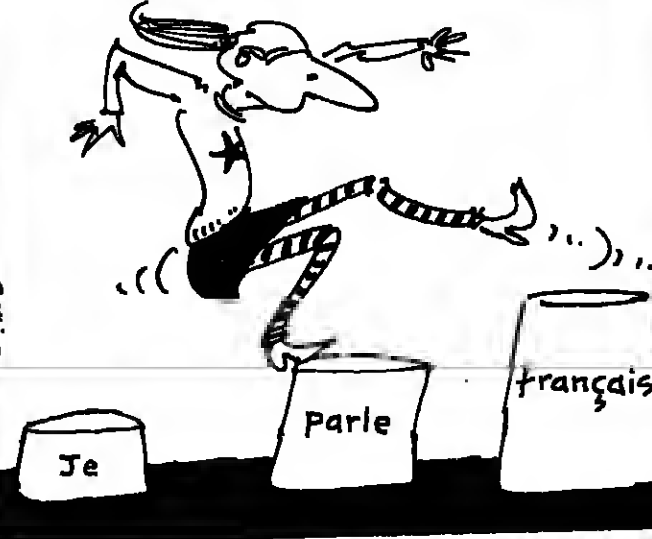
"North Sea oil has been described as having as great an impact on our economy as the industrial revolution," says the publicity material for this six-part video package. The claim is rather open to doubt; the microchip might be a more legitimate candidate for such a historical role.

But aside from the boardroom intrigues and family melodramas that mix oil with soap so easily in *Dynasty* and *Dallas*, the workings of the industry are not widely understood. Despite the importance of oil, and its effects on the particular areas of the country, there is a paucity of educational material.

These films were produced by Occidental North Sea, an American consortium which was awarded a licence by the Government for oil exploration in 1972. The films tell the company story, making it more or less inseparable from how the business of producing oil is successfully carried out.

Sandy Gall is the presenter throughout, and he gives the enterprise the style of an investigative television documentary, lending it the air of independent objectivity that such

Step by Step



Brian Hill reviews two language series

There are, however, one or two significant differences between the French and German series. *Parle* makes much more use of the studio presenter. He is friendly, encouraging and directs pupils to specific activities, such as diagrams in the accompanying notes with instructions to fill in grids, tick the correct boxes, make up lists or trace the directions given on a town plan.

In the notes, written by Derek Utley, every lesson starts with a table for the teacher showing the function of each section and the language areas which pupils could be expected to understand, together with the key items they could also be called upon to say.

The exercises are crucial to the successful use of the programme and the teacher is asked to duplicate them

or to make overhead projection transparencies for classroom use. There are many innovative ideas, though some of the hand drawings could be criticized for not being clear enough.

The German series does not have a directed structure for the activities and the presenter has a minimal role, confined largely to giving the titles of subsequent dialogues. There are no references to specific exercises and the radio content is, therefore, a succession of relevant dialogues and situational conversations which the teacher is left to exploit in the most appropriate way.

The notes, written by Ted Neather and Donald Richards, have a different feel from the French ones. To start with the whole transcript of the radio programmes is given, something which in recent surveys of priorities teachers

have put at the top of their list.

There are of course many specific and interesting suggestions for follow up together with examples of exercises. The emphasis here is more on reading skills and text than on pictures and grids. A further difference is that while being most appropriate for Level 2, the German series does provide some material for Level 1 and one programme, on Leisure, for Level 3.

It is too early to say which of these approaches will ultimately have most success. Both have their strengths. Even more crucial now will be the way the programmes are presented and used by the teacher in the classroom. It will be interesting to see which elements of each prove the most popular and it may be that future series will aim for an approach somewhere between the two. The ultimate test will be how far they manage to get the pupils actively involved in using the language in a purposeful way and how far they really do train the communicative skills.

For copies in being from now on each Monday from 10.45-11.00, but the German series was selected for block transmission in September. The pattern of schools radio broadcasting has become almost impossible to decipher with night-time transmissions, daytime block transmissions and traditional week by week transmissions. It is clear that we are all going to have to pay a lot more attention to the fine print in the various BBC publicity leaflets.

If recordings have not been made for any reason, cassette copies will be obtained by contacting BBC Emergency Cassette Service, Centre for Educational Technology, County Civic Centre, Mold, Chwyd CH7 1YA. The notes are available from the Language Centre, Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, Brighton, price £1.35 (French) and £1.15 (German) both inclusive of postage.

Next week: Brian Hill on Greek Language and People and L'Italia dal Vivo

briefings
radio & tv

For schools

MUSIC TIME

(Monday 10.15
Thursday 14.15, BBC2)
"Fast and Slow" is a programme to help seven to nine-year-olds recognize changes in the speed of the regular beat of a piece of music. More Christmas songs are introduced and teachers are advised to record the programme.

DOCUMENTARY RE-RUN

(Monday 11.00, ITV)
A unit of three programmes selected to show how documentaries examine different aspects of different societies. "The Church of England" this week.

HÖR DOCH MAL ZU!

(Wednesday-Friday 10.30, VHF4)
NB! A series to encourage pupils with little German to continue their studies. The 15-minute programmes comprise a miscellany of short items in German offering information about life in Germany and some language practice.

WAYS WITH WORDS

(Tuesday 11.08, ITV)
"Don't Open the Door if it's a Wolf!" explores the leading of fear and aims to show eight and nine-year-olds that fear is natural and that reading about it can help them cope.

MATHS TOPICS

(Wednesday 10.30, BBC2)
This resource series gives 13 to 16-year-olds advice on "Data Reduction". Shows how to calculate "average" and "spread" in given set of data.

DICH OY HECHO

(Thursday 9.15, BBC2)
How do you cope with pesetas and ask for the things you need in Spanish? These mini-programmes use simple sketches, actuality film and graphics to teach basic communication skills.

CRAFT, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

(Thursday 9.59, ITV)
This programme emphasizes the importance of the designer. Shows first the craftsmen who built Dover Castle and then moves on to the revolutionary ideas of Leonardo da Vinci.

LIVING LANGUAGE

(Thursday 14.00, VHF4)
An adaptation of Paul Theroux's book "London Snow". Will Mrs Mutterence be thrown out of her home before Christmas if she can't pay the rent?

GOOD HEALTH

(Friday 10.09, ITV)
"Love Your Lungs" aims to prevent nine to ten-year-olds from being tempted to smoke. An animated sequence shows how air is breathed in and oxygen used to keep us alive.

bouring stars, our local galaxy and the whole universe are reviewed in a splendid collection of slides.

The same high quality also characterizes the second radiovision programme on telescopes and space probes. Hopefully children will be able to see these slides projected in the well-darkened conditions they will need in December.

The series will end in December with a programme devoted to questions and comments sent in by pupils themselves. This should provide a lively and instructive 20 minutes that is certain to lead to further improvements and additions to what is already a well researched programme.

This series deserves wide acceptance in schools. Teachers will find that it not only supplies many explanations but helps to distinguish between science fact and fiction. In the search for explanations, however, it would be regrettable if anyone overlooked the truth of JBS Haldane's dictum that the universe is in fact queerer than it is possible to imagine.

F Anstis

Padded out

Any attempt to reverse the trend of building a program and then designing it is to be encouraged. All too often, programs are built by the seat of the pants, and this applies to professional programmers as well as to amateurs.

With this in mind, Logic-Plan Projects have produced a series of planning sheets for the BBC Micro, Dragon and other computers. These are in A4 and A3 pads, each containing 100 sheets. Both sizes contain high-resolution graphics planning grids. The A3 size also includes areas for program and module design notes.

Some people might regard this as being too rigid, but at least it helps with the problem of design discipline, and you could modify the layout to suit your own needs.

Logic-Plan have also produced an A3 pad of program design sheets. This helps you describe the modules in your program in a simple way and is ideal for program documentation.

If any teacher wants his or her program to be used by other people, or perhaps even to sell it to other teachers, this documentation method may help produce one that will be clear and secure enough to put out for publication.

John Laski

LOOKING AT HOUSES

Across-the-curriculum resource pack using the creative arts and crafts to teach about housing.

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Star gazers

RADIO
Astronomy
A series for 9 to 12-year-olds.
Radio 4 VHF, Thursdays 10.15.

Among the pure sciences astronomy is as well represented on radio and television as any and probably better than most.

In a recent review of Stephen Hawking's performance on a *Horizon* programme concerned with black holes and other astronomical phenomena, the writer explained the popularity of astronomy by asserting that the incomprehensible always attracts the most enthusiastic fan club.

A series of ten programmes have now been devised for Schools' broadcasting to introduce children in the upper classes of primary schools to astronomy. The compilers declare a triple aim: to introduce the subject by setting it in its context of history and to encourage practical observations and recording of simple experiments; and to provide a more informed understanding of current

exploration of the solar system.

On the basis of programmes already broadcast, a look at the teachers' notes and a preview of an important part of the series, it seems certain that these aims will be realized. The programmes will make astronomy less incomprehensible but will also assuredly increase enthusiasm.

Flexibility and variety are keynotes of the series. No two programmes are presented in exactly the same way, and whilst some are better listened to in their entirety, others are better presented in recorded and presented to classes in smaller portions. Amply guided in this and other matters related to their use is supplied in the teachers' notes and in the first programme which is designed as a teachers' guide.

Astronomy is generally associated with the use of telescopes, but a great deal can usefully be accomplished with simple models and open-sight instruments constructed from readily available materials. Such activity not only seems to follow the footsteps of early

astronomers but also provides the best possible starting point for a proper understanding of the basic movements of the heavenly bodies.

Although a telescope is unnecessary, it remains true that astronomy cannot usefully be studied without a look at the night sky. This inevitably presents problems in day schools, but already teachers have been making arrangements for pupils to return in the early evenings to look together at the November stars.

Programme five helps in this respect by introducing the use of simple star charts and encouraging children to look for themselves for some of the prominent stars and constellations. In this activity help might also come from parents and members of local astronomical societies.

The first of the radiovision programmes, which opens with a view of a rocket launch from Cape Kennedy in 1971, fittingly demonstrates that man's interest in astronomy is best regarded as a journey in search of knowledge. The Earth, the solar system, neigh-

Classified Advertisements

Index to Appointments vacant, Wanted and other classifications

Appointments vacant

Nursery Education 32
Headships 32
Other Appointments 32

Primary Education

Headships 32
Deputy Headships Senior Masters/Mistresses 34
Heads of Department 34
Scale 2 Posts 34
Remedial Posts 36
Scale 1 Posts 35

Middle School Education

Headships 36
Remedial Posts 36
Craft Design & Technology 36
English 36
Home Economics 36
Mathematics 36
Modern Languages 36
Physical Education 36
Technical Studies 36
Other than by Subjects 36

Secondary Education

Headships 37
Deputy Headships Senior Masters/Mistresses 37
Remedial Posts 37

Art and Design 38
Careers 38
Commercial Subjects 38
Computer Studies 38
Craft Design & Technology 38
Economics 39
English 39
Geography 41
History 41
Home Economics 41
Humanities 42
Mathematics 42
Modern Languages 44
Music 44
Pastoral 45
Physical Education 45
Religious Education 45
Rural Science 45
Science 45
Social Studies 47
Technical Studies 47
Technology 47
Other than by Subjects 47
Sixth Form and Tertiary Colleges 47
Headships 47
Heads of Department 47
Scale 2 Posts 48
Scale 1 Posts 48

Deputy Headships Senior Masters/Mistresses 48
Scale 2 Posts 48
Scale 1 Posts 48
Appointments in Scotland 49
Independent Schools 49
Deputy Headships Senior Masters/Mistresses 49
Art and Design 49
Classics 49
Commercial Subjects 49
Computer Studies 49
Craft Design & Technology 50
English 50
Geography 50
Home Economics 50
Mathematics 50
Modern Languages 50
Music 50
Pastoral 50
Physical Education 50
Religious Education 50
Science 50
Speech and Drama 51
Technical Studies 51
Other than by Subjects 51

Classics 51
Computer Studies 51
Craft Design & Technology 51
English 51
Mathematics 51
Modern Languages 51
Science 51
Other than by Subjects 51
Colleges of Further Education 52
Directors and Principals 52
Heads of Department 52
Other Appointments 52
Polytechnics 55
Other Appointments 55
Universities Appointments 55
Research Posts 55
Fellowships 55
Studentships and Research Awards 55
Service Colleges 55
Colleges of Higher Education 56
Directors and Principals 56
Other Appointments 56
Adult Education 56

Youth and Community Service 56
Outdoor Education 62
English as a Foreign Language 62
English as a Second Language 62
Tullions 63
Lecturers 63
Educational Courses 62
Personnel 63
Announcements 63
For Sale and Wanted 63
Holidays and Accommodation 63
Librarians 61
Miscellaneous 61
Properties for Sale and Wanted 63

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